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Rescued from Egypt

A. L. O. E.

Tr. Henry Newman

in remembrance of 84th membership
in the

Mayfield Total Abstinence Society

October 13th 1874



MOSES AND AARON BEFORE PHARAOH.

Page 159.



RESCUED FROM EGYPT.

By

A. L. O. E.

*Author of the "Shepherd of Bethlehem," "Exiles in Babylon,"
Pride and his Prisoners," &c.*



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1873.



0472:

Cohen, Richard



HE Gospel is preached in the Pentateuch. This is a truth with which I am deeply impressed, and I have attempted to convey the same impression to my readers in the very imperfect sketch of the Life of Moses contained in the following pages. So sacred do I feel the subject to be, that I have a repugnance to mixing anything like fiction in my work,—though carefully isolating the sacred history from the mere tale, by giving the former in the shape of lectures. Were the lectures published by themselves, I fear that the volume would be unopened by many of those young readers who prefer a story to a sermon. Precious things, for the convenience of transit, are often placed in vehicles which are in themselves of but little value. I would only ask of my

readers not to pass over those portions of the volume which alone are of permanent interest. If any of the lessons contained in the history of Moses be conveyed to the memory and the heart, it matters little how soon the mere vehicle is thrown aside and forgotten.

A. L. O. E.





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RESCUED FROM EGYPT.

CHAPTER I.

NEW INMATES OF THE OLD CASTLE.

VIRESOME skein—full of knots, hard to unravel, and impossible to find the end of!" exclaimed Lina Madden, giving an impatient shake to the scarlet silk which she was attempting to wind.

"It's like our law-suit," observed Cora, her elder sister, who was near her, seated in the deep recess of a mullioned window; "our law-suit which has gone on for months, and may go on for years, since the lawyers make knots on purpose to have to unloose them, and have a very particular objection to ever finding the end."

"One would not think that they could be very long in winding up this case," said Lina, "since the whole rests on whether our second cousin, once or twice re-

moved, was sane or insane when he left thirty thousand pounds to each of us four, his relatives on the mother's side, instead of to Edward Verner, his nephew on the father's side."

"Old Isaac Verner had a perfect right to do what he pleased with his money," observed Cora, with a slight toss of her head; "and as for sanity, he was as sane as I am—managed his own servants, did not squander his money, and very wisely left it to four young people who will find no difficulty in spending it! Sane! why, you know that poor papa went to pay him a visit seven years ago, and said that Isaac Verner was one of the shrewdest old men that he ever had met with."

"I remember that my father wrote a letter to me when he was on that visit to Brierly Lodge," observed Arthur Madden, a young man who was reclining on a sofa, with a book in his hand, but whose attention had been attracted by the conversation between his two sisters. "I have not a very clear recollection of the contents of that letter, for it reached me when we Etonians were in the midst of our great cricket-match with Harrow, and batting and bowling seemed the one great business of life—but I have an impression that my father thought the old man rather eccentric."

"Eccentric, I daresay!" exclaimed Cora, in the quick sharp tone in which she frequently spoke; "every one whose wheels don't run in the old-fashioned ruts of cus-

tom is called eccentric. If I chose to drive red-deer four in hand—which I've often had a fancy to do—I should be called eccentric; or if Lionel went a-hunting in a Welsh wig, he would be called eccentric; and when you, Master Arthur, came home dripping and shivering on Christmas-day, from jumping into a half-frozen pond to save a wretched puppy, you were dreadfully eccentric! If you had been drowned in the exploit, and had chanced to have left any money, your will might have been disputed on the ground that you must have lost your wits."

"How can you talk so, Cora!" exclaimed Lina indignantly; "any one of brave and unselfish nature would understand an act such as that!"

"A side hit at me, I suppose," said Cora. "You are always ready to start up in defence of Arthur; I hope that he is grateful to his champion. You would make a hero of him, and draw his portrait without any shadows, as Queen Bess made her artist draw hers."

"Perhaps we should have a more faithful likeness if I were to sit to you, Cora," observed her brother with a smile.

"'Twould be a photograph," replied Cora; "we should see a young fellow of twenty, six feet high in his stockings, with a tolerably good eye for shooting, a tolerably good seat on horseback, a tolerably good head for his books, and a tolerably good notion of making himself comfortable. One who has no objection to an easy-

chair, an amusing book, and a good cigar. One who will find it easier to spend a fortune of thirty thousand pounds than to earn it; though he can go at a pace when pricked by the spur of necessity, or the lash of keen emulation. One who has a weakness for a blood-horse, a good picture, a choice library, in short—"

"In short," laughed Arthur, "a kind of luxurious dog, who would be all the better if the case went against him, and he were forced to work instead of idling away his time with Tennyson!" and Arthur threw down the volume of poetry which he had been reading, sprang up from the sofa, and walked up to Lina.

"Don't talk of the suit going against us," cried his youngest sister; "it would be such a dreadful misfortune! Why, we should all be dependent on our stepmother; for the trifle which Lionel got by selling his commission, must have gone already on horses and cigars. No, no, Arthur dear, we'll hold our ground against Edward Verner; and then—I've such delicious plans for the future! You'll never idle away your time; and you'll never waste your money! As soon as you come of age—next year—you and I will start for the East, steam along the blue Mediterranean, send home all the loveliest things from Italy, alabaster vases and pictures—"

"And never waste your money," observed Cora drily.

"Then we'll go to Egypt, that glorious old land! sail up the Nile, cross the Red Sea, wander through the desert,

visit every spot named in Scripture with the feelings of ancient pilgrims ! Then we'll enter the Holy Land, the Land of Promise;—oh, Arthur, think of beholding Jerusalem itself ! We'll wander about together, like Sitt Miriam * and her brother ; and then, after we have delighted our eyes and refreshed our hearts by a pilgrimage through the Holy Land, we will choose some spot especially dear to the Christian, and there we will build a little gem of a church, a record of our visit, an offering of devotion, a blessing to leave behind us. What do you think of my day-dream, dear Arthur ? is it not bright as a rainbow ? ” and the young girl looked up at her favourite brother with an expression of trusting fondness in her blue eyes, as if she felt that every enjoyment would be doubled if shared with him.

“ As bright as a rainbow,—I hope that it will not be as fleeting too,” said Arthur, as he seated himself on a chair beside Lina. “ To visit Egypt and Palestine, to track the wanderings of the Israelites from the house of bondage to the land of promise, has been my desire from the days of my childhood, when I first heard the history of Moses from the lips of our own dear mother.”

“ There is such interest in everything connected with the Jews ! ” exclaimed Lina, who was a young girl of fifteen, with lively fancy and warm impulsive feelings.

“ I can never understand that sort of enthusiasm,”

* *Vide* “ Life in Palestine.”

said Cora. "To me the Jews seem the most uninteresting race under the sun. I always connect the name with money-lenders, pawnbrokers, and sellers of old clothes! To my mind, Mr. Verner's having married a Jewess was quite sufficient to account for his uncle's disinheriting him at once, and leaving his hundred and twenty thousand pounds to young relatives whom he never had seen. Fancy marrying a Jewess!"

"She was a converted Jewess," observed Arthur, "and, as I've heard, had suffered much on account of her change of religion."

"Oh, it is said that she was the sweetest creature that ever lived," cried Lina, "and that Edward Verner's heart was broken when he lost her."

"That is nonsense," said Cora decidedly; "why, he was more than forty when he married, and hearts grow tough by that time. You would have been nearer the mark if you had said that grief turned his heart into a money-bag, or why should he grow so greedy after gold, as to dispute our right to our fortunes, by trying to prove in a court of law that his poor old uncle was mad?"

"We must in fairness remember," observed Arthur, "that Isaac Verner had inherited a fortune from his father, who certainly never intended it to go out of his family altogether, as it now seems likely to do. Without being a covetous man, Edward Verner might think

it hard that his grandfather's property as well as his uncle's should be bequeathed to us Maddens."

"This tiresome silk!" exclaimed Lina again, after an energetic pull, which only served to tighten a knot.

"Let me help you, wee thing," said Arthur, bending forward to disentangle the silk, and addressing his youngest sister by a pet name, which she would let no one use but himself.

The weariness of Lina's occupation was gone; the moment that her brother joined her in it, it became an amusement. It diverted and pleased her to see the fingers accustomed to trigger or rein, patiently passing the reel in and out; and her fancy converted the skein-winding into an emblem of life, with its difficulties all smoothed away by the love of a brother. As the winding proceeded, Lina returned to the former topic of conversation.

"I never like to hear Jews spoken against; I think that we owe them so much. Do you remember, Arthur, that years and years ago you thought that you would like to be a missionary to the Jews?"

"Arthur a missionary!" exclaimed Cora scornfully; "he is much too fond of his ease!"

"Too fond of his ease," repeated Arthur quietly, as if pondering over the words.

"You know that Arthur never cares for his ease,"



THE YOUNG PEOPLE.

cried the indignant Lina, "if anything noble and generous is to be done."

"He had better turn missionary to Wildwaste then," said Cora; "I think that is the name of that most dreary, desolate, disreputable-looking village which we drove through yesterday, where the women wear no bonnets, the children no shoes, where nothing looks thriving but the ale-house, and the very cottages seem

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to have forgotten the way to stand upright! If this Mr. Eardley is such an active, super-excellent clergyman as is reported, I wonder that he is not ashamed of such a heathenish-looking place."

"Mr. Eardley has nothing to do with the matter," observed Arthur. "His parish of Axe is a very large one, as we well know, as this Castle Lestrange, which is in it, is five miles away from the church. Wildwaste, as I understand, lies a mile beyond the boundary line."

"And is under a vicar nearly eighty years old, who keeps no curate," added Lina; "so no wonder that Wildwaste is little looked after. Mrs. Holdich, the steward's wife, told me that there is not a worse spot in the country; drunkenness, robbery, and all kinds of wickedness abound there; it is a moral bog, a kind of Slough of Despond. No one willingly goes near Wildwaste, for if he do not lose his way and get smothered in the morass at the back, as one or two tipsy people have done, he runs a good chance of being knocked down and murdered by some of the roughs!"

"One would not expect to find such a den within a mile of this splendid castle," observed Cora; "but I fancy that our landlord, Sir Digby Lestrange, cared very little for the people about him."

"He was a very proud man," said Lina, "who kept up a grand establishment, gave very splendid entertainments, spent a fortune in adorning his place; and who

has now therefore to pay for his folly by living abroad, and letting his beautiful castle to little people like ourselves, who may not be able to count up our pedigree to the time of the Conquest, but who can count down our money to our tradesmen."

"*Our* money!" repeated Arthur playfully; "Mrs. Madden would smile to hear you speak of her money as your own."

"It is all the same thing," replied Lina; "our step-mother knows very well that as soon as we get possession of our fortunes, she will be no loser by anything which she spends now on our comforts."

"I wish that Mrs. Madden had hired a more lively place than this Castle Lestrange!" exclaimed Cora.

"Oh! it is so beautiful—so romantic—so picturesque!" cried Lina. "And then there is plenty to amuse Arthur and Lionel—game in the preserves, deer in the park, and no end of trout in the river!"

"But not a living soul to be seen!" said Cora. "No roll of wheels on the drive, no knocking at the door, no invitations to country dances!"

"That's all to come," observed Lina; "we have not been a week at the castle yet."

"It seems a month," said Cora with a yawn. She cared little for the picturesque, and would have preferred the esplanade at Brighton to the stately avenues of Castle Lestrange. "But I do believe there's a visitor at

last!" she exclaimed. "I see a gentleman walking up the avenue yonder."

Lina jumped up and joined her sister at the window. "He is a clergyman," she observed; "I suppose that it is Mr. Eardley, coming to look after his new parishioners. I daresay that we shall like him, Mrs. Holdich says that he is so good."

"People may be *too* good, at least for my taste," observed Cora lightly. "You had better let Mrs. Madden know that a visitor is coming, she will like to receive him here."

While Mr. Eardley is ascending the broad steps under the portico of Castle Lestrange, I will, as briefly as may be, describe the position of the family who had recently come to be tenants of the lordly dwelling.

Lionel and Arthur Madden, and their sisters, were the orphans of a man who had held high official position, but who had always lived up to his income, and who upon his death had left little to his children beyond the means of completing their education, and a sum to be applied in purchasing a commission for his eldest son. This appeared, however, to be of little consequence, as Mr. Madden's second wife had an ample fortune of her own, and her house was the home of her husband's children. Some months before the opening of my story, a distant relative had died, after bequeathing thirty thousand pounds to each of the four Maddens. The validity


of this will, as the reader is aware, was disputed in a court of law by Edward Verner, who was the only nephew of the wealthy old man, and who had always been regarded as his heir. As to the result of the lawsuit, the young Maddens felt little apprehension. Lionel, on hearing of the large bequest, had at once sold out of the army. He, as well as the younger members of the family, found one of the pleasantest antidotes to ennui in laying out plans for the future expenditure of a fortune not yet in his hands, and which imagination had swelled into a fund of inexhaustible wealth.





CHAPTER II.

A MORNING CALL.

T was in a mood of pensive thought that Mr. Eardley approached Castle Lestrangle; he had not visited the place before, since the departure of its proud possessor. How sore a pang must it have cost Sir Digby to let the halls of his ancestors to strangers—to permit the daughter of a wealthy saddler to reside where his knightly fathers had dwelt! The clergyman sauntered slowly up the broad avenue bordered with statues, in which the baronet had taken such pride. At the end was the mount, with steps of marble, which was to have been crowned with a kind of temple to Fame. A fierce storm in summer had injured some of the statues, and cast down two from their pedestals. The injuries had not been repaired, the statues had not been replaced. Instead of the temple, a tall pole crowned the summit of the grassy knoll, on the top of which a gilt weathercock

shifted and turned with every passing gust of wind. Mr. Eardley raised his eyes to the restless vane, and it struck him that no more suitable monument could possibly have been raised to mere earthly grandeur. He thought of that singular inscription on a Mohammedan building in India,—*Jesus said, this world is a bridge; we pass over it, but we must not build on it.** Strange if the followers of the false prophet have embalmed a saying of the Lord which has been literally, and, alas, how often practically forgotten by Christians!

If the avenue showed signs of change, such was not the case with the castle or the garden. Never had the rich beds of the latter bloomed with a greater profusion of the flowers that make September so bright: geraniums, fuchsias, and verbenas. The castle looked stately as ever, with its frowning battlements and lofty towers; a splendid Virginia creeper, near the entrance, threw its scarlet drapery over the cold gray stone. Mr. Eardley missed nothing but the waving banner, which used to betoken the baronet's presence in his home.

The clergyman entered the drawing-room, an apartment of great size and beauty, where modern art had lavished its decorations with an unsparing hand, almost marring—at least in Mr. Eardley's opinion—the picturesque effect of the antique room. The sunlight streamed

* I quote this inscription from memory. I think that the account of the building is to be found in Sir W. Sleeman's "Wanderings of an Official."

through mullioned windows, throwing on the velvet carpet deep rich stains from the arms of Lestrangle emblazoned on their diamond panes. Mrs. Madden, as she came forward to meet her visitor, swept with her rustling black silk over one of these stains; the foot of the stranger trod on the emblem of family pride.



MR. EARDLEY'S VISIT.

Mr. Eardley could not help feeling the presence of that lady something incongruous in that old castle. Mrs.

Madden was, as I have inferred, the daughter of a saddler who had risen to be one of the aldermen of London. She was comely, though somewhat too stout in person, and looked like one who was accustomed to the good things of life, and well disposed to enjoy them. The widow wore that profusion of glittering black ornaments, by which mourning itself can be made to look gay; and the plump hand which she courteously extended, shone with an unusual number of rings.

The appearance of Mrs. Madden's step-daughters was more in harmony with the place. They were both refined and elegant girls, but here all resemblance between them ceased. Cora, with her dark eyes and rich complexion, would have been decidedly handsome, but for a slight inclination of the nose upwards, and of the lips downwards, which suggested an idea of a satirical disposition; a somewhat sharp tone of voice and rapid utterance contributed to this impression. Lina was a shy girl, with light hair and dreamy blue eyes, and that varying colour which shows quick feeling and an excitable temperament. The dress of the two girls varied, like their manners and countenances; fashion had been most studied in that of the elder, the picturesque in that of the younger. Mr. Eardley was not one who often formed his opinion on first impressions, but those received in that visit to the Madden family left him most prepossessed in favour of the young man, Arthur, who joined

little in the conversation, while pursuing his occupation of disentangling Lina's skein, but the glance of whose intelligent dark eyes showed him to be an attentive though quiet listener.

Mrs. Madden, who dearly loved gossip, and who never came to a new place without wishing to know everything about everybody dwelling near it, after the usual common-places about weather, launched into her favourite theme. Mr. Eardley was closely questioned regarding Sir Digby Lestrangle and all his belongings: was it true that the baronet had entertained in such an extravagant style—that he had invited all the ministers from London—had spent a hundred thousand pounds on improvements—had been shamefully robbed by his servants, and had turned them all off at an hour's notice? Was it true that his daughter was a wretched little dwarf, dreadfully deformed, and a cripple from her birth?

Mr. Eardley disliked gossip on principle. He was himself above the petty curiosity which is usually the mark of a vulgar mind. His replies were courteous but brief. He took no pleasure in exposing the faults and follies of his parishioners; he had the boldness which can openly rebuke sin, but the charity which casts its covering mantle over the sinner. On one point alone the clergyman spoke fully and warmly; he dwelt on the sweetness and goodness of the baronet's child, whose infirmities, which he trusted that time, with God's

blessing, would entirely remove, had but served to endear her to all who saw her patience under the trial of ill health.

"I like him,—he has some enthusiasm in him; he stands up for the absent," was the mental comment of Lina.

Cora now joined in the conversation, and gave it another direction. She spoke of the dreadful state of Wildwaste, remarked how shamefully it was neglected; and Mrs. Madden observed that the clergyman of the place seemed quite unfit for his charge.

Again Mr. Eardley evaded the attempt to draw him into an expression of condemnation. His manner silently reproved that censorious spirit which makes so many both accusers and judges of their brethren, especially of those who hold the office of preachers. He did not, could not, deny that Wildwaste was in a disgraceful state; but he had experienced too many difficulties in his own very extensive parish, to leave him leisure or inclination to condemn shortcomings in others.

"Can nothing be done for Wildwaste?" asked Arthur. It was the first sentence which he had uttered since the visitor's entrance.

"I can do nothing directly for the people," replied Mr. Eardley. "In the spring I held a few simple cottage-meetings at the dwelling of Holdich, Sir Digby's steward; you can see its gable yonder through the trees.

As this part of my parish lies so very far from my church, I thought it of importance to have short services here twice in the week, to enable those who could not reach Axe, to worship together under a good man's roof. As Wildwaste is so near, and has no weekly service of its own, it was possible that some of its people might attend these cottage meetings. My principal object in calling here to-day," here Mr. Eardley turned and addressed Mrs. Madden, "is to mention that this autumn I am commencing a new series of brief lectures on the life of the lawgiver Moses, on Tuesdays and Fridays, the first commencing this evening at seven. I altered my original hour for the convenience of the poor; it was difficult for men engaged in labour to come till their working-day was over."

"It is a good plan, a most excellent arrangement," said Mrs. Madden, whose mind had wandered from the topic of conversation to some little domestic concerns of her own.

"Perhaps," said Mr. Eardley, after a pause, "you would mention the meetings to your servants, or to any others over whom your influence extends. The lectures are simple, the congregation humble, but the subject which is to be treated of is of interest to every Christian." He glanced towards the young ladies as he said this; Cora had taken up her crochet, and did not raise her eyes from the work; but Lina smiled and said,

"Yes, indeed," as she met the kindly gaze of the clergyman.

Mr. Eardley rose to depart. Mrs. Madden hospitably pressed him to take a glass of wine after his ride, and hoped that one of the grooms had seen to the refreshment of his horse. The clergyman smiled and owned that he kept no horse; he always walked over from Axe.

"Then, I am sure, after a five miles' walk, and with another before you, you must need a little refreshment," said the lady, and the black beads of her bracelet rattled as she stretched out her hand towards the bell-rope. Mr. Eardley courteously declined the proffered kindness; he had visits to pay in two or three cottages, he said, and on lecture evenings Mrs. Holdich always expected him to take a little tea at her home. "She and her good husband were so hospitable," added the pastor, "that he believed that it would quite disappoint them if he now failed to do so."

Mr. Eardley then took his departure, accompanied to the portal of the castle by Arthur.

"What a pity it is that the worthy man does not know how to tie his neckcloth!" was the exclamation of Cora, as soon as the drawing-room door had closed behind the visitor. "But what can one expect of a vicar who actually goes twice a week to drink tea with a steward and his wife!"

"I daresay that he finds it a great convenience,"

observed Mrs. Madden, leaning back in her cushioned arm-chair; "and doubtless he likes to keep these Holdiches in good humour, or he could hardly expect them to turn their parlour twice a-week into a chapel of ease. One needs to manage this low sort of people, who are never pleased unless they are hand and glove with their betters."

"Mrs. Holdich is anything but low," said Lina; "and as for her husband, I fancy, from what I have heard, that he acted a brave, noble part, by boldly backing his vicar in all his plans, at the risk of bringing himself into no small trouble."

"No reason why Mr. Eardley should let himself down to such people," said Cora, giving her mouth that peculiar downward curve with which she usually accompanied such observations—"her vinegar look," as her brother Lionel called it.

Arthur Madden now rejoined the ladies. "Would you object," said he to his stepmother, "to our dining half an hour earlier than usual this evening? I am thinking of walking over to the lecture."

"Well," exclaimed Cora, with a short laugh, "you must find the place duller than even I do, if you are driven for amusement to join half-a-dozen clod-hoppers in dirty smocks, to listen to a cottage lecture!"

"If Arthur goes, I'll go too!" cried Lina.

"Of course you will," said Cora with a sneer. "If

Arthur took a fancy to reside at Newgate or Bedlam, you would find out something romantic or poetical in his resolution, and be sure to follow him."

"Others would do well to follow Arthur," began Lina, the angry colour rushing to her cheek; but her brother stopped the retort on her lips by a glance, and quietly repeated his question to Mrs. Madden, without taking notice of Cora.

"I might advance the dinner-hour a little, there is no harm in that," said the good-natured lady, ringing the bell. Arthur was rather a favourite with his step-mother, being more consistently attentive to her wishes than either his brother or sisters. He was also of a calmer temper than the others, and Mrs. Madden, after her own fashion, was a lover of peace—not for its own sake indeed, but because quarrelling disturbed her comfort. She was a cheerful, easy-going woman, whose thoughts revolved in a narrow circle, seldom diving deeper than the subject of household arrangements, or soaring higher than the consideration of some piece of gossip in fashionable life, contained in the morning papers. In regard to her step-children, Mrs. Madden held very slackly the reign of command, or rather she dropped it altogether, and as long as their wills did not interfere with her own, she let the young people do much as they pleased. She never made the slightest attempt to win their confidence or their love, or to gain influence over their minds. She

humoured their little fancies, smiled at their petty squabbles, and had a comfortable persuasion that she was a model step-mother, most prudent, impartial, and kind. Whether Mrs. Madden would have been quite as kind if there had been no prospect of her step-children succeeding to ample fortunes of their own, was a question sometimes discussed by the acquaintances of that lady. I use the word "acquaintances" designedly, for though Mrs. Madden had no enemies, she had never made one real friend.

It was very pleasant to Lina Madden to saunter in the soft twilight of a delicious evening to the pretty cottage of Holdich, leaning on the arm of her favourite brother. Novelty has ever a charm to the young; and to Lina, who had been brought up in London, cottage-meetings were entirely new. They seemed to her fancy something like the primitive assemblies of former times, when the worshippers of to-day might be the martyrs of to-morrow. Lina had also the comfortable idea that in attending this week-day service she was doing something very religious; and this strengthened her persuasion that, as regarded spiritual things, she stood on higher ground than any other member of the family, Arthur alone excepted. It is more than possible that a feeling of opposition to her elder sister helped to give a zest to the young girl's pleasure, so strangely are motives mixed even in ingenuous minds!



CHAPTER III.

THE little congregation which Arthur and Lina found assembled in the parlour of Holdich consisted of the steward himself and his gentle wife, a farmer of the neighbourhood and his little maid-servant, and several of the labourers who worked under Holdich, with their wives and some of their children. The people were quiet, and appeared to be devout—a little flock gathering around a faithful shepherd. Mr. Eardley was already at his post when the Maddens entered the cottage.

LECTURE I.—THE INFANT MOSES.

In the slight sketch which, with God's permission, I hope to give you of the life of Moses, and the deliverance of the children of Israel from slavery in Egypt, I shall endeavour to keep three views of the subject before you—the historical, the typical, and the practical view. To explain my meaning more simply: I wish us first to consider the life of Moses as the history of a great and

good man, a patriot and lawgiver, who was raised up to save his nation from a most cruel yoke, and to lead them to the land which God had promised to their fathers. This is *the historical view*. But there is deeper interest to ourselves in the story of the rescue of Israel from Egypt, than can attach to any mere account of past deeds, however grand and heroic. Moses was a type of the blessed One who hath redeemed His servants from bondage more cruel than that of Pharaoh—a type of Him of whom it is written, *Behold, I have given Him for a witness to the people, a Leader and Commander to the people*; and in the history of God's chosen nation we see a picture of the Christian Church, redeemed and guided through this world's wilderness to the heavenly Canaan above. This is *the typical view*. But there are also many lessons to be drawn from the character of Moses, and that of the people whom he led, lessons that may serve as aids to our faith, and incentives to earnest devotion and active obedience to God. It is to this, *the practical view* of the story, that St. Paul would draw the attention of Christians when he wrote to the Corinthians of the wanderings of ancient Israel: *Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples, and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.*

May the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Knowledge and of Love, bless our meditations on this subject in its three-

fold aspect ; making us receive with *faith* the wondrous history recorded by Moses, giving us *wisdom* to perceive the precious truths conveyed in types, and *meekness* to profit by the examples and the warnings which meet us at every point of the story of the people rescued from Egypt !

About 2427 years after the creation, and 1577 * before our Christian era, a monarch mounted the throne of Egypt, taking the name of Pharaoh,† which was common to the kings of that land. Pharaoh found himself at the head of a great and powerful people, renowned for their arts and inventions, their mighty buildings, and their knowledge of the stars, many ages before the name of Rome had ever been mentioned, or this island of Britain been known to exist in the western corner of the earth.

* In the margin of our Bibles the supposed date of the birth of Moses is given as about 1571 years before Christ. This was before the founding of Athens, and more than eight hundred years previous to the founding of Rome. The preservation of such very ancient writings as those of Moses (the first five books of the Bible, usually called the Pentateuch) seems in itself a miracle, and reminds us of the inspired declaration, *The word of God endureth for ever*. What but the Lord's providential care could have handed down from generation to generation, for more than *three thousand three hundred years*, writing penned so many ages before the invention of printing !

As to the fact of the sacred record being really so ancient and so precious, we have not only the testimony of the Jewish nation, who have been and are to the present day most careful and jealous guardians of Old Testament Scriptures, but what, to the Christian, is of all authorities the highest—the witness to their value and their truth from the lips of the Son of God : *If ye had believed Moses ye would have believed Me, for he wrote of Me; but if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe My words*.

We have also the Lord's authority, as well as that of His inspired apostles, for regarding as typical much of what the Pentateuch contains. As examples of this, I refer the reader to Luke xxiv. 27 ; Luke xxiv. 44 ; John iii. 14.

† As to the name of this monarch, and the exact dynasty to which he belonged, various opinions are held by the learned. Rollin, following Archbishop Usher, writes that he was called *Ramesses Miamum*. Mr. Wilkinson, the explorer of the monuments of Egypt, was inclined to think that Amasis of the Theban dynasty was the persecuting Pharaoh who knew not Joseph. (See Dr. Kitto's "Pictorial History of Palestine.")

In Egypt lived a race that was not Egyptian. The family of Jacob, or Israel, had migrated from Canaan, their home but not then their possession, and had taken refuge in Egypt from the fearful famine of which we read as occurring in the time of Joseph. Egypt had at first kindly welcomed the shepherd strangers, and given them a home in the land of Goshen—the eastern portion of the Delta of the Nile. Here the family of Israel, by God's peculiar blessing, had *increased abundantly and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty, and the land was filled with them.* The large family and household of Jacob had rapidly grown into a nation, and become an object of jealousy to the people amongst whom they dwelt, and the monarch who then ruled over them.

Behold, said the king of Egypt, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we. Come on, let us deal wisely with them; lest they multiply, and it come to pass that when there falleth out any war, they join also to our enemies, and fight against us.

In accordance with his cruel policy, Pharaoh set taskmasters over the Israelites, and forced them to labour. To break their spirit, and keep down their numbers, a pastoral people were compelled to become makers of bricks and builders of cities for their cruel oppressors. Yet the more they sought to crush them, the more God's people spread and increased, till Pharaoh resolved on a measure which he deemed must be as effectual as it was

barbarous. The tyrant commanded that every infant born of an Israelite mother should thenceforth be flung into the river Nile!

We may conceive the thrill of indignation and horror which such a command would arouse in the homes of Goshen! What "curses not loud but deep" must have burst from the lips of fathers as they clenched in vain despair the strong hands which they dared not uplift in defence of their babes! With what agonized entreaties for mercy mothers must have clasped the doomed little ones to their hearts! It was at this fearful time that Moses was born; he first opened his infant eyes to the light under the cruel sentence of death. It was under trying circumstances indeed that Amram, of the tribe of Levi, and Jochebed his wife, received this gift of a son from the Lord! Of the piety of these Israelites we can entertain no doubt, as St. Paul expressly declares that it was through faith that they hid their babe for three months, and were not afraid of the king's commandment, disobedience to which would doubtless be heavily visited on those found attempting to conceal their children.

And here how forcibly are we reminded of the dangers to which One greater than Moses was exposed in the days of His feeble infancy! As the murderous decree of a tyrant doomed to death all the little babes in Goshen, so in after times Herod gave stern command to slay the infants in Bethlehem. Peril alike encompassed the

cradle of the future deliverer of Israel from bondage, and of Him who was to save His people from the most terrible yoke of Satan.

It must have been very difficult to conceal the existence of a wailing babe in the home of Amram, and after the lapse of three months it was found to be possible no longer. Jochebed must give up her child. Yet, clinging fondly to the hope that God would protect the infant whom she could shelter no more, the mother made a little ark of bulrushes, which she coated with pitch and slime, and in this frail bark she placed the babe amongst the flags by the brink of the Nile.

Doubtless with a very heavy heart, Jochebed left her infant—as it seemed—to perish ; but Miriam, his little sister, remained to watch what should befall the helpless babe protected alone by the providence of God. Presently she beheld a band of Egyptian women approaching, one of them a lady of exalted rank. The daughter of the mighty Pharaoh, surrounded by her maidens, was descending to wash in the Nile. This princess is supposed to be the same as that one known in Egyptian history as Amense—who afterwards reigned, exercising her power conjointly with Thotmes I., who, as her husband, shared her throne. In Jewish history the princess is called Thermutis, and it is there recorded that she had long been married, but had not been blessed with a child. It was not by chance that the eye of Pharaoh's daughter



FINDING OF MOSES.

rested on the little ark amongst the rushes, so that she gave command to one of her maidens to bring it to her. It was not mere admiration for the babe "exceeding fair," or yearning pity in the breast of the childless woman

towards a weeping babe, that made Pharaoh's daughter resolve to adopt that little one as her own. God, in whose hand are all hearts, shed tender compassion into the Egyptian's, and made the daughter of a tyrant the protectress of the child whom her father had doomed to destruction !

Then, with a presence of mind which was remarkable in one so young, little Miriam came forth from her place of concealment, and ventured to address the princess bending over the beauteous babe. "Shall I go and call thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee?" suggested the intelligent girl. Thermutis gave her consent; and we can imagine with what eager speed Miriam would rush back to her mother, her eyes sparkling with delight, bearing the joyful tidings that the baby was safe, and under the protection of the greatest lady in the land ! We can imagine with what an overflowing burst of joy and gratitude to God, Jochebed would retrace her steps to the Nile, and would receive her own babe from the princess, with the gracious words, "Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages." How fast would fall her tears of joy upon her rescued darling, as he ceased to weep, and smiled up in her face, knowing already the touch of a mother's hand, the sound of a mother's voice ! Amram and Jochebed would feel that indeed their babe had been given to them twice, and we are assured that

in faith they humbly devoted that precious child unto God.


A simple but beautiful lesson is contained in the story of the infant Moses ; it is, faith in the providence of God. We may commit in humble trust, not only ourselves, but those who are dearer to us than life, to the watchful care of our Lord. All our efforts to guard them from grief or danger we may feel to be feeble and insufficient, as the bulrushes woven by Jochebed's hands. The deep waters of trouble may seem to be closing around them, as the flood of the Nile round the babe ; but let us confide our beloved ones to Him whose love is deeper, stronger, wiser, more abiding than our own ! Let us recall His gracious promises, and rest on them the burden of our cares : *Can a woman forget her sucking child ? Yea, they may forget, yet will not I forget thee. I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.*





CHAPTER IV.

A RISING CLOUD.

VERY slight allusion was made at the castle to the meeting in the steward's cottage. A few jesting questions from Cora, and the subject appeared to be entirely dropped.

There was a good deal to take up the attention of the ladies at Castle Lestrange on the following day. Cora had no longer reason to complain of the dulness of the place, for most of the country gentry who lived within reach of an afternoon's drive, made then their first visit to the Maddens. Lionel also arrived from London. Just before the hour of dinner the clatter of hoofs was heard on the drive; and Lionel, who had ridden from the nearest station, came up at a gallop, pulled up his horse, flung the rein to a groom, dismounted, and strode up the marble steps into the hall.

The young man was not received by his family with much demonstration of affection; Lionel was one who

rather despised "sentiment and that sort of thing," and considered a nod and "How are you all?" quite sufficient greeting. The late ensign in Her Majesty's —th had still something military in his appearance, and when in the home circle assumed a somewhat overbearing manner, which in society was overlaid with a smooth politeness, not altogether free from affectation. The haughty impatient spirit of the young man was but lightly covered over by this conventional smoothness; as Cora once laughingly observed—the electro-plating was thin, a very little rubbing would show the brass underneath. Though not so tall as his brother's, Lionel's figure was good: his features were more regular than Arthur's, but his brow was less broad, his eye less thoughtful, than those of his younger brother.

Conversation flowed free and fast at the dinner-table at the castle. Lionel had just come from watching in London the progress of the law-suit, and gave an animated account of the proceedings which he had witnessed in court, in answer to numerous questions asked by Mrs. Madden and his sisters. Arthur was more than usually silent, and looked as if the subject were wearisome or distasteful.

"London must appear dull now," observed Mrs. Madden, after the conclusion of the meal.

"London in September is the dullest place under the sun! Not a soul left in it that can get out of it;

scarce a carriage to be seen in Hyde Park, or a horseman in Rotten Row. One is glad enough to escape into the country out of the smoke, the dust, and the glare! By-the-by, I've bought a new rifle; and as I suppose we'll have hunting through the winter, I looked in at G——'s to see his horses. I've pretty well fixed upon two, a chestnut and a bay."

"What—two more horses!" exclaimed Lina; "what a bill you must be running up at that dealer's!"

"Oh, he gives unlimited credit," replied Lionel carelessly; "he knows how to deal with gentlemen."

"You young people will find a pretty large slice cut out of your fortunes before you get them," observed Mrs. Madden, with a smile; "we've had a parcel from Bond Street to-day with pearl ear-rings and brooch for Cora, and Lina has set her little heart on having a harp from Erard. I suppose, Arthur, that you have written as you intended for those rare engravings of which you spoke this morning at breakfast?"

Arthur shook his head, and replied, without raising his eyes as he spoke, "I think that before we run into debt for pictures, horses, or jewels, we had better wait until judgment is given in our favour."

"Humbug!" cried Lionel angrily; "our money is as safe as if we had it at our banker's, all the world knows that! The matter would have been polished off months ago, had not these sharks of lawyers wanted more of the

pickings, so they must send off all the way to Australia (had it been to the moon, 'twould have suited them better !) to get the evidence of old Verner's servant as to his master's sanity. As if such evidence could be needed, when the old man's nearest neighbours have stated upon oath that if they wanted a shrewd opinion on any matter of business, he was just the person to whom they always applied."

"The clergyman of the parish did not give quite such satisfactory evidence, if I remember right," observed Mrs. Madden.

"Old Verner did not listen to his prosing or attend his church ; but that was no sign of madness, whatever the parson might think it !" exclaimed Lionel, with a scornful laugh. "The judgment is safe enough, I'd stake my head on the issue ; but the lawyers hobble the horse with difficulties, lest he should get too soon to the goal. Why, Arthur, where are you off to ?"

"The room is hot—I will take a turn in the open air," said the young man, abruptly quitting the apartment.

"What's the matter with Arthur?" said Lionel ; "he's been dumb as a fish all dinner-time."

"And never emptied his plate nor filled his glass," observed Mrs. Madden.

"I fear that he's ill," said Lina, rising from the table.

"Ill—no, he's only sulky !" cried Cora ; "the dinner

was not dressed to his liking, or something has occurred to put him out of humour. He did not come near one of our guests to-day. If he chooses to play the bear, let him growl in his den alone."

Lina darted an angry glance at her sister and followed Arthur, whom she found slowly sauntering in the twilight down the broad avenue leading from the castle. Her step was so light that, absorbed in thought as he was, he did not hear it, and he started as she laid her hand on his arm.

"Arthur, dear Arthur, you are not well."

"Never better," he answered abruptly.

"Then you are not happy; something has vexed you; tell me what it is; you never hide anything from me, from your own wee thing."

Arthur gave a little cough, walked on some steps in silence, and then turned round in the direction of the castle. He evidently did not wish to prolong the conversation with his sister.

"Will you not speak to me?" asked Lina sadly.

"What would you have me say?" replied her brother. Lina looked up into his face, and thought, as well as the dim light allowed her to see it, that its expression was careworn and stern.

"I would have you kind, loving, trustful with your Lina, as you always have been," said the young girl, her blue eyes filling with tears.

Arthur walked on for a few paces without speaking, then said, but not as if addressing his sister, "It would be such a blow to the family if the verdict were given against us."

"A blow, yes, a stunning, a crushing blow!" exclaimed the impetuous girl; "debt, dependence on Mrs. Madden! It would be a thousand times worse than death; especially," she added in an under-tone, "if Cora's suspicion is right, and the good lady is not likely long to remain Mrs. Madden. But how can you frighten me so with shadows; we are sure, perfectly sure, that the verdict will be in our favour. Our uncle thinks it, our lawyer is certain of it, every one who speaks to us says just the same. There's Lionel, who has just come from London, you heard him declare just now that he would stake his head on the issue!" Lina spoke with a good deal of excitement; from any one but her darling brother she would have resented a doubt on the point as an insult.

"Men ere this have staked their heads on the success of a cause, and have lost them," said Arthur, with a smile which had nothing of mirthfulness in it.

"I should call any one a croaker who should speak so, except you!" cried Lina with some impatience. "You were never one to meet misfortune half way. It is not wise—it is not right; and after all that we heard last night about reliance and trust!" Lina had alluded

to Mr. Eardley's words lightly, but it was not in lightness that her brother replied.

"Faith is a very different thing from presumption, Lina. What assurance have we that Providence will grant us success in this matter? What assurance have we that success itself would come as a blessing?"

"Oh, I can't stand that sort of talk!" exclaimed Lina, with a burst of petulance. "I always like to look

at religion as a bright thing, a comforting thing; but when it is brought forward in that way, as if to prepare one for misfortune, or to convince one against reason that poverty, misery, and ruin can be for one's good, it repels, it annoys, and one never wishes



BROTHER AND SISTER.

to hear another word said on the subject;" and, almost for the first time in her life, Lina turned from the being

whom she loved best upon earth, and Arthur saw her white dress fluttering up the broad steps as she re-entered the castle.

A heavy sigh escaped from his lips, an expression of pain which seemed disproportioned to its cause, and yet Arthur was not wont to give much vent to his feelings. Much as he loved his sister, he could usually have borne with philosophy a little outburst of her childish displeasure. There was a deeper source for that sigh, which was followed by the muttered words, "I cannot do it; better far burn the paper to ashes."

Lina was not likely long to be angry with Arthur, and when, about an hour afterwards, he joined the family circle, she greeted him with a smile, and playfully asked if he had thought her dreadfully cross. Arthur met the smile with a kindly look, but did not answer the question. There was evidently a cloud on his spirits, and it did not pass away with the evening.





CHAPTER V.

SECRET STRUGGLES.



ON the succeeding day, being Sunday, the Madden family attended divine worship at Axe. The general conversation at the meal which followed was of that light and frivolous kind by which so often impressions left by the sermon are trifled away. Mrs. Madden wondered who the people were in the pew to the left, and whether the lady in the white veil had been newly married, and how it was that the Brindsleys did not go in their carriage. Lina remarked on the delightful picturesqueness of the nice old church, and wished that she could have made out the inscription on the curious monument in the corner. Cora, in her satirical vein, approached the more dangerous subject of the preacher.

"If Mr. Eardley's eloquence in the cottage equals his eloquence in the pulpit," she said, with a little scornful

laugh, "I don't wonder at Arthur's starting up from the dinner-table, or going without dinner altogether, to enjoy so intellectual a treat, in company with erudite ploughboys and cow-herds!"

"I care less for eloquence than for earnestness in a preacher," replied Arthur Madden. "His object should be not to please the taste, but to reach the conscience. The hungry man would rather receive bread from a wooden trencher, than chaff from a salver of gold."

"Exquisite symbol! most poetical and most original idea!" cried Cora.

"The parson grappled with a tough subject," remarked Lionel Madden; "he would hardly have preached on that text had he been within ten miles of the Stock Exchange."

"No; in the busy, bustling, gain-loving world there are few that would bear to be told that *the love of money is the root of all evil*," said Lina. "But it was not a lesson to touch us; I don't think that any of us care much for money."

"Perhaps not for the mere hard cash, not for the yellow dust," observed Lionel; "but every one in his senses cares for what money can bring."

"It brings comforts certainly," remarked Mrs. Madden, as she slowly poured some rich sauce over the delicate viands on her plate.

"It gives position in the world," observed Cora, who had no mean idea of her own dignity as the heiress of thirty thousand pounds.

"It lets a fellow do what he likes, buy what he fancies, spend his time as he chooses," said Lionel.

"It opens the way for so much pleasure, so much innocent amusement!" cried Lina; "travelling, music, purchasing pictures, gratifying one's taste, pleasing one's friends! What are you thinking of, Arthur; why do you look so grave?"

"I was thinking," replied her brother, "that all these things, harmless enough in themselves, might become like Atalanta's golden apples in the fable,—draw the runner from the straight course, and make him come short at the last."

"Arthur is kindly going to favour his benighted hearers with a second edition, much improved, of Mr. Eardley's sermon," observed Cora, folding her hands with an air of mock reverential attention.

"But really, Arthur, you don't mean to say that it's wrong to like to have comforts, and riches, and pleasures," said Lina Madden. "You would not have us give up all, and go barefoot like friars of old?"

"No," replied Arthur Madden; "but I think that we are in some danger of caring so much for these things as to pay a fatal price for their possession."

"Trash and nonsense!" cried Lionel angrily; "that

kind of cant may go down well enough at a meeting, but it is quite out of place at a dinner-table."

His loud tone made Mrs. Madden raise her eyes, which had been complacently contemplating the contents of her plate. She had attended little to the conversation, but caught the sound of a rising storm. "My dear Lionel," said the placid step-mother, "I'm sure that Arthur meant nothing."

"Arthur is grateful no doubt for your defence," laughed Cora; "he certainly did mean nothing, or he would suit his practice to his preaching."

The young man knitted his brow. His sister's jest had cut more deeply than the taunt of his brother, none but himself knew how deeply, for conscience had given a sharp point to the random shaft. Arthur felt that temptation was at that moment luring him from his goal. He was the only one in that family who had a definite goal; the rest were revolving in circles more or less narrow around the centre of self. It may be desirable to let the reader know something of the present state of the young man's mind.

Arthur could not remember any period of his life when he had been indifferent to religion: his earliest recollection was of his mother's pointing out to him stars, when he sat as a child on her knee, and telling him of the beautiful home beyond them prepared for the people of God. Since the gentle lady's departure,

Arthur had never looked on those stars without thinking of his mother—he saw her monument far more in those living, sparkling gems, than in the cold mural tablet which bore her much-loved name. Arthur had, almost as an infant, set out on his pilgrimage to Zion, like one of Christiana's children, holding by the hand of a mother.

But other influences surrounding the boy had not been such as to impel him onward. Arthur, amidst the luxuries of a wealthy, and the temptations of a worldly home, had had little to favour spiritual progress. He kept his religion much to himself, both in his family and at his school; therefore, as it made him more kindly, faithful, and generous, it rather, on the whole, increased than diminished his popularity with his companions. Arthur had not much to bear beyond an occasional sneer from Cora, or a little blustering from Lionel, neither of which usually disturbed his serenity much. Heir now to a comfortable fortune, which would enable him to enjoy the fruits of industry without any toil to procure them, Arthur saw a pleasant luxurious life opening before him, attractive to one who was naturally disposed to be self-indulgent. Young Madden had acquired knowledge almost without effort, had made friends with ease, and had the prospect now of being beneficent without any self-denial. But there is danger, especially to the young, in those very gifts of nature

and fortune which render them objects of envy. It is over the still, unruffled pool that the green weed gradually creeps ; it is on the sword left long in the scabbard that the rust-spot slowly spreads. Arthur was in peril of sinking into the easy, careless professor, whom the world tolerates, whom it even will praise, because though his outward conduct is blameless, there is little in it to convey rebuke to those whose standard is lower than his own.

It was temptation, sudden and unexpected, that had come to rouse the young man to a sense of peril, to prove to him that his faith was less firm and strong than he had believed it to be. The recruit, steady at drill, faultless in the easy routine of duty in time of peace, may be startled when suddenly brought face to face in war with a powerful foe. When he needs to draw his sword for actual warfare, then the young soldier becomes aware of the rust that has gathered on the blade. Arthur's family noticed a change in his manner and appearance for which they could not account. His temper, naturally fine, became irritable ; his spirits lost their elasticity ; he seemed to have no longer relish for amusement. These were but the outward signs of a painful struggle within. Indecision is wearing to the spirits and the temper : to Arthur this trial was a new one, and it must be owned that he bore it but ill. He needed a counsellor in difficulty, and in his family none

was to be found. There was not one, not even his darling Lina, who could enter into his feelings, or understand his secret scruples. Arthur had an oppressive consciousness of standing alone. He had scarcely yet reached that point in experimental religion where the Christian, in full childlike confidence, comes to his heavenly Father for the wisdom to show him the right course, and the strength to enable him to pursue it.

It was not unnatural that Arthur's thoughts should frequently recur to Mr. Eardley, as one who could give advice, disinterested and faithful. Young Madden had felt attracted towards the clergyman from the first hour of their meeting; there was something peculiarly winning in the manner of Mr. Eardley that invited confidence as well as inspired respect. Arthur was yearning for the moral support of an elder brother when brought into contact with one who seemed well fitted to fill that position towards him. It was this that made the young man resolve regularly to attend the cottage-meetings, regarding these as a link between himself and the vicar of Axe.

It caused some surprise and some mirth in the Madden family when Arthur mentioned his intention of remaining at the castle on the following Tuesday, instead of going with the rest to a croquet party, to which they had all been invited. To give up the gaiety was not on this occasion any sacrifice to Arthur, for he had that on

his mind which would have prevented his finding pleasure in that or any other kind of amusement.

"You don't mean to say that you are not going with us!" exclaimed Lina, in great disappointment. "I thought that you would be in such spirits to-day, up to anything, as you were when first we came here, after that famous report of proceedings received from our lawyer this morning."

"Do you not know the attraction that keeps him fluttering within sight of the steward's cottage?" said Cora. "He's the bee—the busy bee—bound to gather honied wisdom from the lips of a learned and reverend lecturer, while we, silly butterflies, dart away to sport ourselves idly in the sun."

"Arthur's not such a fool," said Lionel. The younger brother flushed at the taunt, but Lina interposed,—“I think that Arthur means to give the afternoon to shooting,” she said.

"No, Lina, I am not going to shoot, and I am going to the cottage lecture." It was somewhat difficult to bring out the sentence in that presence, but Arthur was determined to show no shame.

Lina's countenance fell. It had been all well enough to attend the meeting once, when there was no other more tempting engagement, and when Lionel was not at the castle. Curiosity seemed sufficient motive for so doing, and she had rather enjoyed showing her independ-

ence of Cora's opinion, while a feeling of self-satisfaction had arisen in the young girl's mind. But to give up a croquet party, to enter again as a lowly worshipper the humble dwelling of a steward, to listen to such teaching as was avowedly meant for the poor, and that in the face of Lionel's open contempt, Cora's sarcasm, Mrs. Madden's quiet surprise—this was to Lina a sign that Arthur must be becoming righteous overmuch, a great deal more grave and strict than beseemed a talented, accomplished young man, the heir of an ample fortune. It was a very different thing from talking of going forth on a mission to the ancient people of Israel, in Palestine's glorious land; there was something to attract a poetical mind, something of romance and adventure in such a mission as that, but to make himself peculiar by doing what, as Lina said to herself, no other man of his age and prospects would dream of doing, was like donning a Quaker's broad brim, or clipping his hair in Roundhead fashion.

"If Arthur, my own noble Arthur, turn Methodist or Puritan, it will be more than I can bear," thought Lina.





CHAPTER VI.

LECTURE II.—DECISION OF MOSES.



WE are not told in the Holy Scriptures how long Jochebed was permitted to watch over her child, the adopted son of the daughter of Pharaoh. We cannot doubt that a pious woman, such as we know Jochebed to have been, would try to avail herself of the earliest dawn of intelligence in the mind of her boy to sow the precious seed which might spring up afterwards into vigorous life even in the midst of the temptations of a luxurious heathen court. It is most natural to suppose that Moses was taught by his mother that love for his own despised and oppressed nation, which was one of the most striking features in the character of this holy man.

Deep must have been the anxiety of the pious mother regarding the future career of her boy when separated from his parents. He was given, indeed, every intellectual advantage in the court of Pharaoh. The mind

of Moses was carefully cultivated ; he was instructed in the learning for which Egypt was then celebrated above all other nations of the earth, and Jewish tradition records that he became also a distinguished military leader. *He was mighty in words and in deeds.* That love to his people and faith towards God should have survived in the breast of Moses while surrounded by idolatry and all the pomps and vanities of the world, and dwelling amongst those who looked down upon Israel as a nation of bondsmen, this indeed is a miracle of grace. It reminds us of that miracle in nature by which grains of corn buried for many ages with a swathed Egyptian mummy, have still retained the vital principle when brought into sunshine, planted and watered, showing by rich growth and abundant increase that life could maintain its mystic power even in seeds long entombed in the dwelling of darkness and death.

It would be deeply interesting to trace the earliest struggle in the soul of Moses, the first conflict between love of the world and love of God. Jewish tradition relates that the royal tiara of Pharaoh being once sportively placed on the head of Moses when he was a child, the boy tore the emblem of power from his brow, threw it down, and trampled it under his feet. But we cannot rest on tradition ; we turn to the sentence in the inspired Word of God, from which we learn not only the decision of Moses, but from whence he derived the strength to

form it. *By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward.* The temptations of the world, its glories and its pleasures, had been spread forth before his eyes, as they were afterwards more vividly displayed before those of his Lord and Master. Moses had resolutely made his choice—affliction rather than riches, reproach rather than worldly honour. And let us mark the expression—*the reproach of Christ.* Moses, by faith, looked forward to the coming of Him in whom all nations of the earth should be blessed, of Him who was to be of the family of Abraham, and of the chosen race of Israel. Moses knew that God's word had been pledged to his fathers to give them the land of Canaan, and Moses believed that word. He had respect to the recompense of the reward. This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.

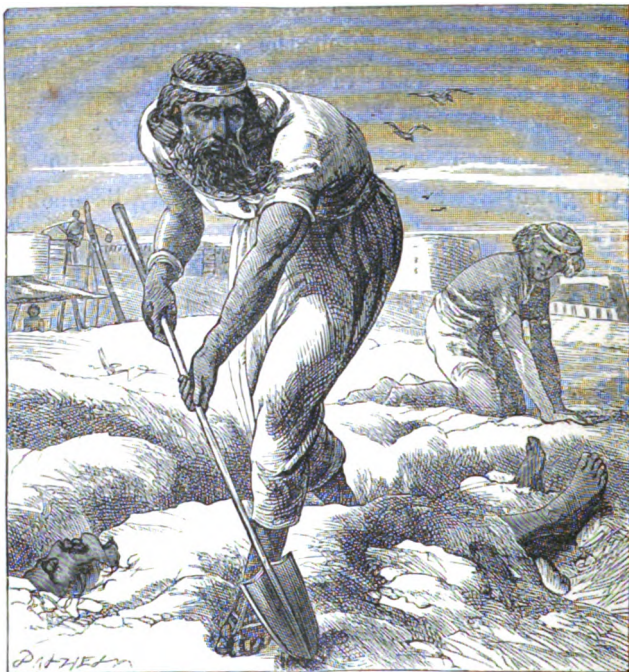
After his refusal to assume the dignity of a prince in Egypt, the court of Pharaoh must have become a painful residence for Moses. The words of Stephen (Acts vii.) in reference to this period in the life of the future law-giver, lead to the conclusion that he had already formed designs for freeing his nation from the yoke. *He sup-*

posed that his brethren would have understood how that God, by his hand, would deliver them.

In the prime of his manhood Moses quitted the court, where he had been distinguished by his position, his talents, and his actions, and departed for the province of Goshen to visit his brethren, the children of Israel. If he went thither with any hope of finding a gallant nation eagerly waiting for the fulfilment of God's promise, ready to welcome a deliverer and rise to claim their birthright of freedom, Moses was grievously disappointed. The Israelites grovelled under their oppressors, the fetters of slavery lay on their souls; nay, more, the history of their desert wanderings shows how deeply tainted was this people with the superstitions and idolatry of Egypt. Moses must have seen little to encourage him, much to cause grief and rouse indignation. Was it for such as these that he had renounced the brilliant prospects before him, that he had given up all the glories of a most magnificent court? Again are we reminded of One who *came unto His own and His own received him not*; who was rejected of those for whose sakes He had quitted a throne in the skies.

An act of cruel oppression, of which he was a witness, roused the spirit of Moses to an act of interference, by which, should it become known, he imperilled his life. Moses beheld an Israelite shamefully maltreated by an Egyptian, rushed to the rescue, smote the oppressor, and

slew him ! The laws of Egypt on the subject of man-slaughter were very severe ; to slay even a slave was a crime to be punished with death ; no mercy could be looked for by an Israelite who had killed an Egyptian.



MOSES HIDING THE EGYPTIAN IN THE SAND.

Moses hid the dead body in the sand, conscious that his safety lay in concealing the deed, and trusting in the silence of the man whom he had saved at such imminent risk to himself. An incident which occurred on the

following day showed him how vain was such trust. Moses beheld two Israelites striving together, and in the spirit of a peace-maker attempted to quiet the dispute. "Ye are brethren," he exclaimed, "why do ye wrong one to another?" But he who injured his neighbour thrust him away with the taunt, "Who made thee a prince and a judge over us? Wilt thou kill me as thou killedst the Egyptian?"

These were startling words to Moses; they showed him that his secret had been betrayed, that his deed was known, and that his life depended on instant flight. Amongst the Israelites he might find sympathy perhaps, but no protection. Moses made his escape to the land of Midian, nor did he fly too soon. When the account of his having killed an Egyptian reached the ear of Pharaoh, the king resolved to punish the act with death. Vengeance would have tracked out its victim, had not Moses made his escape already beyond the tyrant's reach.

Thus, having given up all, he who so lately had been regarded as a prince and a leader, now a houseless, friendless, destitute wanderer, sat down by a well in a foreign land! *Given up all*, did I say? No, Moses had not given up his conscience; he had not given up his faith in his God. The blessing of the Lord was upon him, a blessing such as the Saviour Himself pronounced — *Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath*

left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children for the kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting.

Never, perhaps, was this blessing more fully realized than it was by Moses. He came to Midian a friendless exile—he received there wife and children, father and brother-in-law. God moved the heart of Jethro the priest, in whose abode Moses for many years found a peaceful home. I shall not dwell on the striking incident which was the means of introducing the exile to his future protectors, the chivalrous aid which he gave to the maidens attacked by the shepherds of Midian. It seemed the instinct of this brave and gentle spirit to help the weak against the strong, to defend the oppressed against the oppressor. The adventure which resulted in the wanderer's finding a bride and a home in the land of the stranger was but a link in that chain of providential events by which God, in the case of Moses, as in that of each of His faithful servants, makes all things to work together for good to them that love Him.

Again, if we consider Moses as one who, for conscience' sake, resigned a high position in the court of Egypt, drawing on himself, doubtless, the contemptuous pity, the scorn of the men of the world, for what they would deem an act of madness, how shall we now, looking back through the vista of ages, regard the choice which he

made? Moses *might* have been a great prince, a successful warrior; he might have had his exploits sculptured on Egyptian walls to excite the admiration of his contemporaries and the curiosity of modern explorers. He might possibly, if worldly ambition could have grasped its highest prize, have mounted the throne of the Pharaohs, and ruled for a few brief years; then, as a mummy carefully embalmed, swathed in regal grave-clothes, have been laid underneath some mountain pyramid of brick or stone, till the last trumpet of judgment should rouse him *to shame and everlasting contempt!* Such *might*, under every favouring circumstance, have been the career of the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter. Ambition could have hoped for no more. Moses turned back from that glittering path of worldly dignity and honour; he chose the reproach of Christ; and what did he lose by treading the vale of humiliation, through which the way of duty led! As leader, deliverer, lawgiver, has not his name been held in reverence from generation to generation? was he not God's chosen instrument for effecting a mighty work? was he not highly exalted in the eyes of mankind? will not his memory be honoured as long as the world shall endure? Moses resigned the distinctions which worldly knowledge might have won, and the spirit of heavenly wisdom was abundantly shed upon him; the Holy Ghost inspired his lips, and guided his pen! Every sacrifice which he made has been

already a thousandfold repaid; and what mortal mind can grasp what yet remains to be enjoyed by this faithful servant of God? In blessed possession of the rich inheritance purchased by the blood of his Lord, the heavenly Canaan, into which Christ's redeemed enter by faith, how will Moses regard the decision which he formed in the court of Pharaoh? If there had been a doubt on his mind, if there had been a struggle in his heart before that decision was adopted, how strange, how inconceivable must such doubt or struggle appear to him *now*! What! hesitate between life and death, light and darkness, heaven and hell! For a moment think of grasping a bubble, with a priceless jewel in view! How trifling must every sacrifice now appear weighed against the exceeding great reward!

Dear brethren, is there not something in this glorious example which sounds to us like a trumpet-blast upon the battle-field of life? None of us are likely to be called upon to give up one tithe of what Moses resigned, for the kingdoms of this world and all the glory of them are a prize held out but to few. But the principle involved in the act of Moses is one which must be faithfully applied to the conduct of *all*. We must each, in our different spheres, deliberately, firmly decide, rather, if need be, to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. We must each deliberately, firmly decide to trample beneath

our feet whatever obstructs us on a course of duty. Not harsh—not unneeded was the command, *If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off; if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out.* There is a point in the lives of most men, when conscience and inclination point in opposite directions; when we cannot serve God and please self; when faith is required to make some sacrifice painful to flesh and blood. In such an hour of dark perplexity let us think of Moses in the palace of Pharaoh. We know more than the Hebrew could know of the love of God in Christ; his faith grasped the hope of a future Messiah—but ours has stood, as it were, by the Cross, has gazed up in adoring wonder on the Son of God making His soul an offering for sin! Can we behold that great Sacrifice made for us, and yet shrink from the lighter sacrifices which may be required of us as pledges and proofs of grateful love?

Oh, Christian brethren, in such times of trial of how many of us may it be said, *The spirit truly is willing, but the flesh is weak.* Yes, our strongest resolutions will bend like reeds in the blast of temptation, if we draw not our strength from above by humble earnest prayer. Let us, without mental reserve, with an earnest desire to do or suffer God's will in all things, seek for guidance with the inquiry, *Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?* God will not only point out the path of duty, but support our feeble faltering steps with the strength of His own right arm; and we, like Moses, shall find in

that path blessings beyond our hopes, blessings worthy of being bestowed by Him who is the Fount of all good. God can richly make up, even here, for whatever is sacrificed in His service, and His promise endureth for ever—*Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life !*

After the prayer, which, as usual, concluded the service, Arthur Madden, as soon as he had risen from his knees, went up to Mr. Eardley, and silently wrung his hand. Not a word was spoken by either ; the young man's heart was full of conflicting emotions, and he could not, in presence of others, give utterance to what he felt. But that grasp and the glance which accompanied it often recurred to the vicar's mind that night ; and his last thought ere he fell asleep took the form of a prayer for the young silent stranger of whom he knew so little, yet who, though he scarcely knew why, had awakened strong interest in his mind.





CHAPTER VII.

THE LETTER.



“YES, sir, my master is at home, but he is engaged now with a poor widow ; if you will step in and wait a few minutes, Mr. Eardley will soon be at leisure to see you.”

The clergyman's little servant maid, as she said this, looked up doubtfully at Arthur's spirited black horse, which was pawing the ground, impatient of delay ; she had no inclination to undertake the office of holding him during his master's visit to the vicar. Arthur relieved her by calling out to a lad who was lounging by the green gate of the vicarage lawn, to hold his horse while he went in—and, dismounting, followed the girl to a neat little parlour, there to await Mr. Eardley.

Arthur did not sit down ; he felt restless—strode up to the bay window, and stood for some time gazing out ; but he could not have told afterwards whether garden or houses lay beyond, for what the eye seemed to rest

on, the mind did not take in. He then turned abruptly and went up to the table; a copy of the *Times* lay upon it; Arthur mechanically raised the paper, and the heading in the law report so familiar to him, Verner v. Madden, was the first thing to attract his attention. He threw down the paper with a muttered exclamation, and wished that the vicar of Axe would not keep him waiting so long. Then there was the sound of voices in the hall, the clergyman courteously dismissing the widow, and in another second the door opened, and Mr. Eardley came in to welcome his guest.

"I scarcely know why I should trouble you with what regards my private affairs," said Arthur Madden, after the first greeting was over, and the two gentlemen had taken their seats. He spoke with averted eye and knitted brow, and it struck Mr. Eardley that the young man looked thinner and older than he had done at their first meeting at the castle. Arthur paused, coughed, and went on, "But I am in difficulty at present, and am in want of a friend."

"That in itself is enough to give you a claim to find one in any minister of the gospel," said Mr. Eardley. The tone of his low rich voice was more encouraging even than his words.

"You doubtless have heard—every one that knows us has heard of the law-suit in which we are engaged."

Mr. Eardley bowed assent. "From what I hear," he

remarked, "it seems likely to come to a termination in your favour."

"All my friends and my family think so. I thought so myself till Saturday last," observed Arthur, drawing a pocket-book from his breast pocket. He slowly opened it, and drew out a letter closely written and crossed. "This," he continued, "is a letter which I received when at Eton from my father, who wrote it while on the only visit which he ever paid to Mr. Isaac Verner."

"The gentleman, if I recollect rightly, whose last will and testament is the subject of dispute?"

"Yes, and on whose sanity at the time that he made that will the whole question at issue rests."

Mr. Eardley inclined his head, but did not offer any observation.

"I read the letter hurriedly when I received it; indeed, I suspect that the part which is crossed I could not have read at all. Last Saturday I carefully perused it, and the contents somewhat startled me," said Arthur Madden, holding out the epistle to Mr. Eardley as he spoke.

"Do you wish me to read this?" asked the clergyman, taking the not very legible letter into his hand.

"Not all, it would not interest; but this last part which is crossed, beginning here." Arthur pointed out the place, then leant back in his chair, and passed his hand across his brow. He could have repeated every

word of that portion of the letter by heart, he had perused it so often ; but he left the clergyman to decipher it, sentence by sentence, a task which required some patience. I give this portion to the reader.

“Certainly he is a singular character, this old cousin of ours. He astonished me yesterday night when we had become quite confidential together. We were talking of his nephew Edward, his heir, of whom he is very fond and very proud, as I believe that he has reason to be. Old Verner drew his chair close to mine, dropped his voice to a whisper, and told me, as if he were disclosing some secret of state, that his nephew’s future career would be very striking and very brilliant ; that no one else guessed it at present ; but that he knew by his horoscope that Edward *would marry a princess of the blood !* I kept my countenance as well as I could at this curious disclosure, and asked the old man if he did not think that he might have calculated wrongly. He shook his head gravely, and assured me that all was confirmed by visions ; that he often had visions on the subject ; that he kept them to himself for the present ; but that he was certain that all would come true. Edward would marry a princess, and be made a duke and knight of the garter. ‘He’ll need money to support his rank,’ continued the old man ; ‘I’m saving up for the purpose. My father left me sixty thousand pounds. Says he on his deathbed, “ You’ll take care of Ned, ’twill

all be his in the end." I've doubled the sum since then, —'twill be something for him to begin with ; and, of course, the nation will settle a pension on his wife.' I found that there was no use in attempting to argue the poor old man out of his delusion ; it has taken the strongest possession of his mind. It is clear that, however sound his judgment may be on all other points, he has decided monomania upon this."



ARTHUR AT THE CLERGYMAN'S.

"Very strange!" murmured Mr. Eardley under his breath, when he had made out the sense of the foregoing passage.

"Might not that letter be very important as evidence in a court of law?" inquired Arthur Madden.

"Most important, I should think," replied Mr. Eardley, resting his gaze thoughtfully upon the paper, "both as bearing on the question of Mr. Isaac Verner's sanity, and also as showing the clear intentions of his father as well as his own in regard to the property now under dispute. May I ask what you propose doing with this paper?" he inquired, as he returned the letter to Arthur Madden.

"What ought I to do with it?" asked Arthur. A breathless silence followed the question.

"That letter might turn the scale," observed Henry Eardley, his countenance reflecting the anxious doubt expressed on that of his guest.

"And reduce me and my family to poverty," said Arthur, "for the trifling sums left by my father for our use have all by this time been expended. I might bear it myself," continued young Madden, "though I like poverty as little as most men do; but to drag down others—my sisters"—before his mind rose the image of a fair girl, with eyes raised wistfully, imploringly to his—"to drag down them to indigence is a sacrifice which I dare hardly contemplate, which I cannot believe that honour demands. Let the lawyers settle the matter between them; no one can expect me to bring forward evidence in favour of my opponent." Arthur spoke almost with petulance, then paused again, and went on

in a calmer tone. "And yet when I picture to myself the decision given in our favour; friends congratulating us on the verdict; wealth showered upon us, which in my conscience I believe—which from this paper I know—to belong rightfully to another, to one of unblemished reputation, who has only been disinherited through the whim of a madman,—I seem to see in that ill-acquired gold the riches of Egypt—the price of a soul!" Arthur rose and strode up to the window, then turned abruptly with the question, "What would you do in my place?"

"I dare not affirm what I *would* do, but I know what I think that I *should* do," replied Mr. Eardley, rising after a moment of reflection. "I am aware that I do not view this question as a man of the world would view it, and that my advice is different from what a man of the world would give. I should think it right to place that paper in the lawyers' hands, that those who have to give judgment in the case should lack no means of forming that judgment according to equity and right. But I should take no step without thought—"

"Thought!" exclaimed Arthur, impetuously; "since I read that letter on Saturday I have scarce thought of anything beside this fatal law-suit! it has broken my sleep, it has haunted my dreams, it has pursued me through every occupation, like a spectre dogging my steps. I have known no peace, no rest, till yesterday evening in that cottage, when it seemed as if a flash of

light broke on my darkness, and I felt for a space as if God could give me strength even for such a sacrifice as this !”

Mr. Eardley was touched by this allusion to the help which he himself had unconsciously given to one almost overpowered in mental conflict with temptation. The remembrance of the example of noble self-devotion which had been brought before him on the preceding evening had now a soothing effect upon Arthur, and he said more quietly, “But I have interrupted you, pardon me ; what were you going to observe ?”

“I was about to add, that as I would take no step without much thought, neither would I without first communicating with my family upon the subject.”

“My family !” repeated Arthur sadly ; “I know well how they would regard such a Quixotic act as that of making public the contents of my father’s letter. I should by doing so throw down the gauntlet to every one with whom I am connected by ties of blood ; I should be cutting myself adrift from all with whom I have hitherto most closely been linked.”

“I feel for you from my soul !” exclaimed Mr. Eardley, realizing into what an isolated and desolate position the young man might be thrown. “But yet, as your family have an equal interest with yourself in the case, it seems to me to be only their due to make them fully acquainted beforehand with any contem-

plated act of your own which might have a material effect on its issue."

"By so doing," said Arthur Madden, "I might put it out of my power ever to forward that letter at all."

"Would it not be well to take a copy of it now?" said the clergyman.

"Ah, yes! show the copy, and leave the original with you, to be forwarded to London unless you hear to the contrary from me."

"You could leave the letter with me," said the vicar, "under cover to Mr. Lowe (that is the name of Mr. Verner's lawyer, if I remember rightly). You could carry a copy of it to the castle. I expect Holdich the steward here on business this evening before the post goes out. You might desire him to call at the castle, and ask whether you had letter or message for Axe."


"And if I send *none*," said Arthur, turning yet more pale as he spoke, but looking full into the face of his friend, "forward that letter to Lowe. The case may go for us, or may go against us. I cannot, will not purchase a verdict in our favour by suppressing such a document as that. Will you favour me with writing materials?"

About an hour afterwards, Arthur Madden was slowly riding on his homeward way, with a heavy, anxious heart, but with a conscience no longer burdened. He, like the Israelite of old, had come to a fixed decision.



CHAPTER VIII.

HONOUR AGAINST INTEREST.

HE luncheon at the castle was later than usual, and light conversation prolonged the meal. Arthur, silent and anxious, sat opposite to the marble clock on the mantel-piece, watching the long hand as it slowly crept upwards to the highest point. "When the hour strikes, I will speak," thought he. "No time better than this, when we are all assembled together."

There was some difficulty in finding a pause in the conversation. Cora and Lina were urging on their step-mother the necessity for giving an archery meeting; and then there was an animated discussion as to whom she should include in the list of her invitations. Lionel volunteered to invite a score of choice spirits from London.

"The birds that you will bring down are the adjutants and scarlet flamingoes," cried Cora; "Arthur, if he con-

tinues in his present mood, would bag nothing but ravens and rooks."

"Arthur has not heard one word of what we have been saying," laughed Lina.

"He is watching the clock," observed Cora, "as if he were to be beheaded at three, and thought it wrong to keep the executioner waiting for a minute."

Lina joined in the laugh which followed, though the melancholy which had lately so visibly oppressed her favourite brother, had been no subject of mirth to her affectionate heart.

"The fact is," said Arthur quietly, as soon as the laugh was over, "that I have a graver subject on my mind than that which you have just been discussing. Don't go away, Lionel, I wish you to hear what I have to say."

"Make it short then," said the elder brother, "or I shall be late for the meet of the hounds."

"You remember, Cora, my alluding last Friday to a letter written to me by my father when he was on a visit to old Mr. Verner?"

"I remember nothing about it," said Cora.

"But I do," interrupted Lina; "for I thought at the time that it would be interesting to read papa's opinion of the curious old man who has left us such fine fortunes."

"I never heard of such a letter," said Lionel; "one would rather like to know what was in it."

"The wish is easily gratified," observed Arthur, unfolding a paper which he had drawn forth while Lina was speaking. His handwriting much resembling that of his father, none of the party present observed that Arthur was about to read from a copy.

"Your poor dear papa!" murmured Mrs. Madden softly, leaning back on her cushioned chair, and composing herself in the most comfortable attitude to listen to the letter of her deceased lord.

Arthur commenced at the beginning, and read on without pause or comment. The first part of the epistle, written in a lively style, chiefly related to himself, and the grand cricket-match in which the young Etonian had been at that time engaged. Then there was an account of Brierly Lodge, and the writer's reception from the old relative to whom he had hitherto been almost a stranger. To this portion of the letter all listened with considerable interest. The sentence just preceding that part which Arthur had shown to Mr. Eardley was as follows:—

"Old Isaac is very clever; his memory is prodigious; he is a kind of walking Encyclopædia. I tried him on a variety of subjects, and found him armed at all points, from the results of the Congress of Vienna, to the best recipe for making Scotch broth."

"There now!" exclaimed Lionel Madden, striking the table; "that's a paper that ought to be brought forward

as evidence in court—so clear, so decisive, so much to the point! I'm glad that that letter has been preserved."

Arthur's only reply was reading on to the end that portion which has been already given to the reader. As he proceeded, Mrs. Madden leant forward from her cushions; Cora raised her dark eyebrows with an expression of mute surprise; Lionel drew in his lips as if to whistle, but no sound proceeded from them.

"Then all is clear as the day!" exclaimed Lina, when Arthur had concluded; "old Mr. Verner changed his will because his nephew's marriage knocked down his castles in the air, and made all his visions of ambition break like bubbles at a touch. How unlucky for Edward Verner that his uncle's madness should have been just on that point!"

"And how lucky for you," said Mrs. Madden, "that the old man's father, who made the money, should not have entailed it upon his grandson. But he never could have guessed that such wild fancies would have entered into any man's brain!"

Arthur laid down the letter on the table before him and looked steadfastly into the face of his brother "Do you still think," he asked, with a touch of satire, "that this paper ought to be brought forward as evidence in court?"

"The sooner it is put at the back of the fire the better," was Lionel's prompt reply.

"We are all now aware," said Arthur, "that Edward Verner's uncle, and his grandfather before him, destined the whole of the fortune in question to descend to their only natural heir; and that but for the caprice of a madman, not even the smallest portion of that fortune would have ever been bequeathed to a Madden."

No one could deny the assertion, but the strong disapprobation which it aroused was very legible in the countenances of those to whom self-interest rendered it so very unpalatable. There was no distinct answer in words; but a murmur was heard round the table portending a coming storm. He is bold who attempts to draw interested parties to concur in a verdict against themselves.

"For my part," continued Arthur with resolution, "knowing what I know, and feeling as I feel, I should regard myself as acquiring another man's property by absolute fraud, were I to destroy or suppress a document which throws such light on the case as this does."

The mine was fired, and the explosion followed directly. Lionel started up with flashing eyes, all the tiger in his nature aroused. "You speak like a madman!" he exclaimed, in a voice hoarse with fury; "a madman fit only for a strait-jacket and Bedlam!"

As if moved by a common impulse, every one else rose from the table. Mrs. Madden looked bewildered, Cora flushed and excited; Lina clasped her hands, and ap-

proached her youngest brother with a gesture of mingled affection and distress.

"Oh, Arthur dearest, surely, surely honour does not require that we should put weapons into our enemy's hand, to use against ourselves!"

"Edward Verner is our enemy in no sense but that in which the traveller may be termed the enemy of the man who means to strip him of his property," said Arthur.

"Fools must not have fire-arms!" muttered Lionel; and with a sudden quick movement he caught up the paper, tore and tore it again into a thousand fragments; then threw them under his feet, and trampled upon them. Cora glanced triumphantly at Arthur, and Lina gave a sigh of relief. At that moment the servant opened the door and entered, then stopped irresolute, from an awkward consciousness that he had intruded on some family scene.

"What do you want?" asked Mrs. Madden, resuming that calmness which events were so seldom known to disturb.

"It is only Holdich the steward, who is on his way to Axe, and has called to see if Mr. Arthur has any commands for the town," said the servant.

"None!" replied Arthur firmly. In that one short word he had launched the bolt which might lay his own house in ruins; he had cut himself adrift from his family,

to be tossed on a sea of troubles to which he could see no shore! Lionel might destroy the copy of his father's letter; but in a few hours the original would be on its way to London; the morrow would find it in the hands of those who would well know what use to make of its contents. None present, save Arthur, could suppose what weight of importance lay in that word.

"The die is cast!" thought young Madden. "I have done what I thought right, and must face the consequences now, whatever those consequences may be." He listened to the servant's retiring steps with a strange sensation of mingled pain and relief. Lionel, whose passion had evaporated in the act which, as he thought, had put a final end to the question, turned on his heel with the remark, "That business settled, I'm off for the meet."

"I will ride too," said Arthur. He could hardly have given a reason for the feverish longing for rapid motion which seized him at that moment; as if he would fain set spurs to his horse, and gallop far away from the thoughts that stung him, leaving his cares and sorrows behind. Perhaps it was the rebound of a young spirit after the long depression of doubt and indecision. Whatever the reason might be, Arthur on that September afternoon rode fast and far, and when he joined the family at dinner, he was no longer a silent member of the circle. On the contrary, he conversed with anima-

tion, related his anecdote, told his story, and seemed the gayest of the gay. In the evening Arthur played at billiards, and won every game that he played. There was an undefined impression on the young man's mind that this was the last evening on which his family would suffer him to enjoy with them intercourse friendly and free. On the morrow that gulf would yawn between them which might never be bridged over by forgiveness. He would snatch the few happy moments yet left, nor forestall the coming trial.

"Arthur seems in high spirits this evening," said Cora aside to Lionel. "That letter has been like a nightmare on him, and he is heartily glad that you should do for him what he had not the courage to do for himself—give his superstitious scruples and the paper that raised them together to the wind! I burnt the fragments," she added with a smile, "so the whole affair has gone off in smoke."


"Arthur's conscience," said Lionel contemptuously, "is like a heavy knapsack, and he is willing enough to shift the burden to shoulders broader than his own."





CHAPTER IX.

NIGHT THOUGHTS.

ARTHUR had kept up his spirits during the evening with a kind of feverish excitement; but when the circle had separated for the night, and, taper in hand, he ascended the broad oak staircase and retired to his own apartment, as the sound of his sisters' laughing voices died away along the corridor, there came a painful revulsion of feeling in the young man's breast. His room seemed to him damp and chilly, and Arthur went to the window to see if the lattice had been left open. The night was rainy and dark, but the chill which Arthur felt had nothing to do with the weather. He seated himself before the table carved and inlaid, which was one of the choice articles of furniture in the elegant little dressing-room which Arthur had converted into something resembling a lady's boudoir. Everything around him told of wealth lavished in the gratification of

taste. Lina had taken care that some of the prettiest vases of porcelain left in the castle should adorn her brother's study, and kept them filled with hot-house flowers.

Arthur long remained motionless, with his arms resting upon the table, and his head bowed down upon them. His spirit was tasting the bitterness of the cup which conscience had impelled him to drink. Convinced as he was that the evidence furnished by himself would turn the scale of decision against him, to Arthur, in the flower of his youth, there seemed to be nothing left in life but a painful struggle with indigence, uncheered by friendship or family affection, nay, rendered more arduous by fierce dissension and bitter resentment. Suddenly Arthur started from his drooping posture, shook back the dark hair which had fallen over his brow, drew his desk towards him, opened it, and penned the following note to his step-mother, Mrs. Madden:—

“The letter destroyed by Lionel was but a copy of that written by my father: by the time that this reaches you the original will be in London. It has been most painful to me to go against the wishes and the interests of my family, but, viewing the subject as I do, I could not act otherwise as a man of honour. It is a satisfaction to me to believe that my dear father would have approved of the course which I have taken. I am too well aware that I have forfeited any claim to the in-

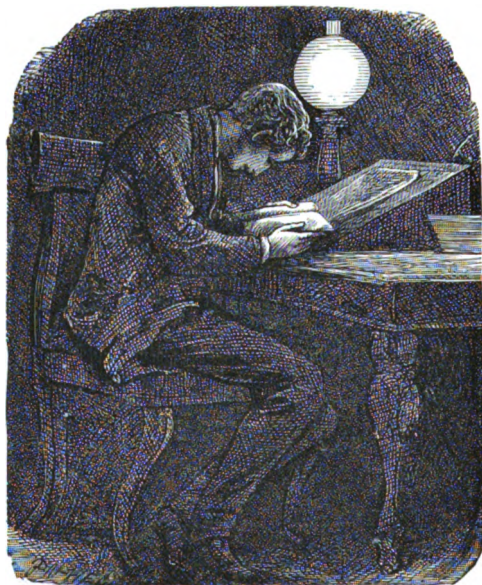
dulgent kindness which I have hitherto experienced at your hands, and that I must now look forward not only to earning my livelihood by my own exertions, but to helping to support my sisters, should the law-suit, as now appears probable, be decided against us. It seems to me that the Civil Service of India offers the best prospect of earning a competence, and I propose trying my chance at the next competitive examination, which is to take place in July. I am most reluctant to allude to the subject of money; yet, as you are aware, it will be impossible for me to pursue my studies so as to succeed in attaining my object without the assistance of a tutor accustomed to prepare for such examinations. I have no resources of my own, no friend to whom I can apply but yourself, and my uncle Ralph, who is at present travelling in Italy. As his means are narrow, I am most unwilling to be a burden upon him; I would rather throw myself upon your generosity to advance what is absolutely indispensable for my support and instruction till I can enter my profession, pledging myself to repay thankfully from my first earnings the pecuniary part of my debt; the kindness and generous trust I can never attempt to repay. If you supply me with the means of so doing, I will not delay for a day, but go up to London at once, and give myself entirely to study. Neither effort nor self-denial shall be wanting on my part, and if you thus aid me to struggle to independence,

you shall find that, unwise and wilful as you may deem me, I at least will never be ungrateful."

Arthur signed the letter, folded, sealed and directed it, then thrust it from him to the other side of the table, muttering, "Bitter ! humiliating !" Then rising, he paced gloomily up and down the study, clenching his teeth, and knitting his brow. "To ask a favour—and such a favour—at a time like this !" Had he possessed more in his purse than a little loose silver, Arthur Madden could hardly have bowed his spirit to the humiliation of craving an advance of money from the worldly coarse-minded woman who could not even comprehend the nature of the principle upon which he had acted. But Arthur had already sacrificed to a sense of duty, interest, comfort, self-indulgence, and family affection ; pride, struggling pride must be sacrificed also. Arthur had racked his brain till it ached, to find out any less painful course by which he might hope at last to win independence both for himself and his sisters.

Arthur sat down at last weary, disheartened, almost ready to believe that his act had indeed been one of folly ; that if Edward Verner had lost his inheritance by the impartial verdict of the law, his rivals could not have been blamed for taking advantage of what was, to them, a fortunate error. Arthur's little velvet Bible lay on his table ; it had been the gift of his mother. He had been accustomed since that tenth birth-day when he

had received it from her hand—the last birth-day which they had spent together—to read a few verses before going to rest. Even when at school the boy had never omitted this practice. Arthur now took up the holy volume, and as he opened it at hazard, his eyes fell



CONSOLATION.

on the words, *Then Jesus, beholding him, loved him.* Arthur stopped; without any reference to the context, that little verse seemed so fraught with consolation to the weary soul. It was like the small plant that preached its lesson of joy and peace to the almost despairing tra-

veller in an African wild. Young Madden had felt desolate and alone; his was a nature that craved sympathy: he had little of ambition in his character, little of that ardent desire to rise to fame and distinction which makes some eagle spirits soar on high, spurning the sheltered nest, and eager to battle with the wind and the storm. Arthur desired happiness rather than distinction, his temptation was more to self-indulgence than to ambition and pride; he cared less for the plaudits of the many than for the love of the few; his ideas of earthly bliss clustered round the word "home." To a disposition such as this, isolation was something terrible, and isolation had seemed to be his inevitable doom. The few words of Scripture before him brought vividly to the mind of Arthur the truth that there is no isolation to him whom the Saviour beholds—and loves. Obedience to a heavenly Master had led the young Christian into a dry barren waste; the well of refreshment which he needed was to realize the love of a heavenly Friend. The image of the God-man rose before him in its mingled tenderness and majesty, the sympathy which was human blending with the love which is divine.

Arthur read on. The passage which had arrested his attention occurs, as we know, in the account of the young ruler who came for instruction to Christ. There was a dim resemblance between the case of that inquirer, and that of the young Englishman who now perused his story.

Arthur had, like the ruler, come to Christ in the flower of his age, seeking guidance, and rendering homage. In reference to outward obedience to the law of his God, Arthur, like the Hebrew, could have said, *All these things have I kept from my youth up*. The command to give up all, *take up the cross, and follow Me*, had come alike to them both; here the resemblance ended.

"*Jesus beholding him, loved him; and yet,*" thought Arthur, "*that young man went away sorrowful*. Oh! had he remained by the Saviour, would he not have stayed rejoicing, with that look of ineffable love resting upon him, which would have more than repaid him for all earth's treasures resigned for the sake of his Lord! Why should my heart be troubled? The same eye that beheld that young man beholds me, the same divine love, the same *treasure in heaven* proffered to him, is freely offered to me. God granting me grace to hold firm to the end, I will never turn away from my Lord! If He bid me take up the cross, He will give me strength to support it, and I never can feel alone, if enabled to keep close to Him. Oh, Thou who canst love as no earthly friend loves, Thy poor, feeble, erring creatures, 'give what Thou canst—without Thee we are poor, and with Thee rich, take what Thou wilt away!'"

It is when a hand, perchance rudely, has cleared the mantling weed from a pool, that the waters sparkle in sunshine: it is when rough friction has removed the rust

from the blade, that it flashes bright in the beam of heaven! None can tell the full power of faith to shed light and glory on the soul, till after some painful sacrifice of will made with the consecrating thought, "*My Saviour, this is for Thee,*" there comes the intense delight of assurance that the sacrifice is accepted! The alabaster box of earthly joy may be shattered, but sweet is the fragrance of the ointment poured out on the feet of the Lord; nor can the deepest sense of unworthiness, on the part of the servant, mar the intense bliss conferred by the gracious word of approval, *She hath done what she could!*


Arthur went to rest that night with the peace of God in his heart, and had sleep more sweet and refreshing than any that he had known since he had re-perused the letter of his father.





CHAPTER X.

MORNING MEETINGS.

 RTHUR awoke on the following morning with much of the feelings of a young untried soldier roused by the bugle at the dawn of the day of his first battle. There was no emotion that should be branded as fear, but a throb of anxious expectation, a bracing up of the soul for conflict, a greater earnestness in prayer for help in the trial which lay before him.

Very sweet was the breath of the autumn morning as Arthur threw wide open his lattice to admit it. The thick dew on the sward below sparkled in the level rays of the rising sun. Arthur went forth from the castle, and wandered for hours amongst the grassy knolls and wooded glades of the park; watched the light-footed deer bounding by, listened to the birds, gazed up on the splendid building which threw its broad shadows over the western slope. Arthur could not avoid contrasting

the soft, luxurious, dreamy life which he might have led in that fair castle, amidst all that could please the sense and charm the fancy, with music and poetry, horse and hounds, mornings of sport and evenings of pleasure, with the stern realities of the working life which had been his deliberate choice. Close study, anything that imposed shackles upon inclination, had always been distasteful to Arthur; he liked careless expenditure in money, no restraint in the disposal of time. Now he must rigidly deny himself indulgences that he had hitherto deemed necessities; he must count his shillings, and mete out his time, and put a bridle on his fancy. It was as if one of the antlered stags that had bounded at will through the forest, were to be broken to the yoke, and forced to toil his daily round in a mill. But Arthur had counted the cost; he might suffer, but he would not repent.

Arthur re-entered the castle before the family had yet assembled for the morning meal. He placed his letter to Mrs. Madden beside the post-bag in the hall, and returned up-stairs to his study, where he intended to await the result of the perusal of his missive. He did not therefore obey the summons of the gong which sounded for breakfast. Arthur heard the rustle of Mrs. Madden's rich silk as she went by, and the lightsome song of Lina as she tripped down the stairs, then the heavy clump of the boots of Lionel—he was more punc-

tual than usual that morning. An interval of silence followed, which to Arthur, as he watched and waited appeared painfully long. It was broken by the sound of a door below hastily opened, and then there was a hurried step on the stairs; Arthur recognized it as Lina's. The young girl flung open his door without knocking, rushed in, and throwing her arms around her brother, who had risen to meet her, burst into a flood of passionate tears.

"Oh! Arthur dearest, what have you done?"

"My duty, I hope," said the young man, stooping to kiss his sister's forehead, and then drawing her towards a sofa and making her sit down by his side. Lina was trembling with strong emotion; her voice was agitated and broken.

"They are so angry—so dreadfully angry. Lionel is furious—he is going up to London directly. I do not know what he can do there, I suppose no one can stop it now; he said—"

"What did he say?" asked Arthur, as Lina stopped short in her sentence.

"Oh, I wouldn't repeat it, I couldn't repeat it," replied Lina, with a fresh burst of tears; "and Mrs. Madden, she spoke just as an alderman's daughter might be expected to speak; as for Cora, she is always malicious and bitter."

"And my Lina?" said Arthur softly.

"Oh, I will never, never desert you!" exclaimed the young girl, "and least of all when you are under a cloud; I think that you have acted generously, nobly—it is high-souled honour that has led you to make this cruel sacrifice!"

"Not exactly that," replied her brother. He thought, but he uttered not the thought aloud, "A mere sense of worldly honour is but an uncertain, and, it may be, a dangerous guide. Bright as it is, it may lure us aside like a fitful meteor. The pole-star that directs the course of the Christian is *the love of Christ that constraineth*."

"Hark!" exclaimed Lina, suddenly raising her head from Arthur's shoulder, on which it had sunk, "there is some one knocking at the door."

"Come in," said Arthur. A servant entered, and while Lina walked to the lattice to hide from view her flushed and tearful face, said that Mrs. Madden desired to speak with Mr. Arthur in the library.

"I will come directly," said the young man; and the footman descended to the servants' hall to spread the report that something dreadful had certainly happened—that he had never seen the family in such a state of commotion—that breakfast had scarcely been touched—that Miss Lina was crying, while Mr. Arthur looked as pale as if he were going to be tried for murder. Surely news must have come from London that the law-suit had gone dead against all the Maddens.

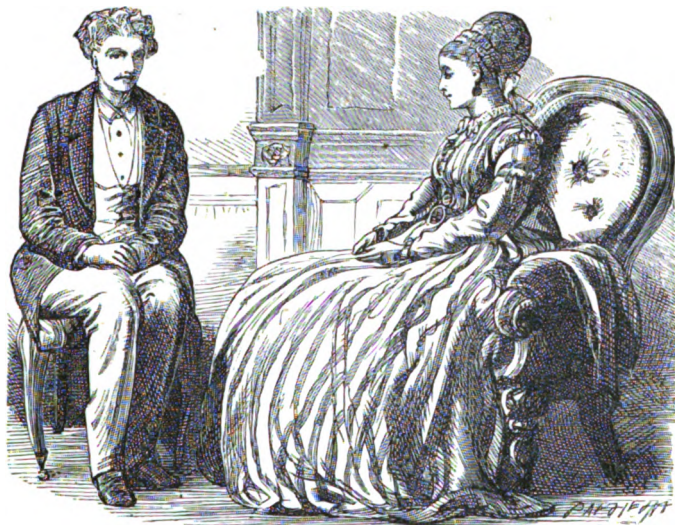
"Shall I go with you, Arthur?" asked Lina, with that feeling, common to the weakest, that their presence is a kind of support to those whom they love.

"No; remain here, dearest," said Arthur, and pressing her hand he added, "your affection is very dear to me, Lina, especially at a time like this."

Lionel was stalking up the broad staircase as Arthur descended it. No word was uttered between them, but Lionel glared upon his brother with a look that would have withered, had looks the power to wither. Arthur met the fierce glance of hatred in the eyes of an only brother with firmness, but not without pain. "This is for Thee, Lord," was the thought which fell as balm on a wounded spirit.

Arthur found Mrs. Madden seated alone in the library. She was a good deal more flushed than usual, and her manner was much more stiff. Though that easy phlegmatic nature could hardly be wrought up into a storm, the beads of the black bracelet on her wrist rattled nervously as the lady motioned to Arthur to be seated. Mrs. Madden cleared her throat two or three times before she addressed the silent culprit before her.

"So—you have done it—plunged headlong and with your eyes wide open into the bog before you, and you expect, as people always do in such cases, that your friends are to pluck you out of the mire. Having done all the mischief that you can do here, you want now to



THE MEETING IN THE LIBRARY.

be off for London, to follow out some fanciful scheme of your own."

"To pursue the studies which may enable me to—"

"Stuff and nonsense," interrupted the lady, with a little impatient jerk of the head; "if you want to study you can study here, I'm not going to throw good money after bad. Write to your uncle if you choose, he may run the risk, but I will not; you know how to fling away a fortune, but no one in his senses expects you to earn one."

"I will write to my uncle," said Arthur, "but in the meantime, till I receive his reply—"

"You must stay here," said the lady decidedly; "you can live nowhere else with all your fine gentleman notions, without running up to your ears in debt." Then, with a little softening in her tone, the step-mother continued, "There is no reason why you should leave the castle directly, though you have done your best, I must say, to make it too hot to hold you. It shall never be said in the world that my husband's son had not a shelter under my roof; there will be gossip enough without that." The lady gave emphasis to the last sentence by another jerk, which set the black bugles on her head-dress quivering.

Arthur found it impossible to feel very grateful for this offer of a temporary asylum, expressed in terms so little gratifying. He would fain have rejected what so coldly was proffered, but, homeless and moneyless as he was, absolute necessity chained him to a dwelling where, as he was painfully aware, unkindness, reproach, and even insult were likely to be his constant portion. Arthur had an intense desire to escape from the daily and hourly annoyances which wound deeply the affectionate, sensitive spirit; he knew how sharp may be that persecution of which the world knows nothing, and that nowhere may *the reproach of Christ* bring a heavier cross than in the circle of home. Arthur was also conscious that no efforts of his own to prepare for a most difficult examination, could render him independent of

the aid of an experienced tutor, who would prevent him from wasting his powers on useless subjects, and would direct his energies into the channels where knowledge would most avail. The young man had, however, to learn that difficult lesson of waiting, which is so uncongenial to the impetuous spirit. He wrote to his uncle in Italy, fully explaining his circumstances; but as Mr. Ralph Madden was travelling and his movements were uncertain, Arthur had a harassing doubt as to whether the letter would ever reach its destination. In the meantime, while awaiting the reply, Arthur commenced a course of hard reading. This he had hitherto disliked; but, under present circumstances, hours spent in his study were far more tolerable to Arthur than those spent in the more public apartments of the castle. Cora never spoke to her brother, not even at the social meal; but she very frequently spoke *at* him, and missed no opportunity of thus taking the petty revenge congenial to her disposition. Mrs. Madden had no darts of satire to fling, but her altered manner made even the household aware that "Mr. Arthur" was in disgrace. A handsome letter which arrived from Mr. Lowe by the Friday's post, gave more of pain than pleasure to him who received it. Even Lina was often a trial to her favourite brother. Her eager championship aggravated the annoyances which she would fain have removed. Cora's quiver of poisoned arrows might in time have become exhausted,

her brother's calm silence might have disarmed her at last, had not Lina caught up, as it were, the fallen darts, and flung them back in defiant scorn, to be used again with keener effect. Lina's affection was exacting; she intruded her sympathy at times when solitude would have been most soothing to Arthur, as an injudicious friend with well-meant offers of service rouses the sufferer as he is just sinking into repose. Lina's love was tender and true, but there was selfishness mixed in that love.

Amidst all these petty trials, Arthur looked forward to the quiet holy hour to be spent in the steward's cottage, as to a short breathing time of rest.





CHAPTER XI.

HOW is it, Lina, that you come down to dinner with cloak on your arm and hat in your hand?" inquired Cora. She was herself in evening attire, jewels on her neck, and flowers in her hair.

"I am going to the cottage lecture with my brother," cried Lina. There was that in her tone and glance which seemed to say, "I will stand by Arthur in this, as in everything else, in defiance of your scorn, or that of the whole world beside!"

"Ten minutes past six," said Mrs. Madden, coldly, glancing at the marble clock on the mantelpiece; "this is the second time that my dinner hour has been advanced to suit the convenience of Mr. Arthur Madden."

"I ought not to trespass on your indulgence," began Arthur, but his step-mother cut him short.

"There is not the least need to do so; my hour from henceforth shall be seven. Attend Mr. Eardley's lectures if you will—I have not the slightest objection to your

so doing—but on his evenings I shall not expect you at my table. I see no reason why your movements should make any change in my household arrangements.”

Such a sentence would not have been spoken two days before by the lady. It conveyed emphatically to Arthur the information that he from henceforth was a cipher in the castle; and could he have doubted its meaning, he must have read it in Cora’s triumphant smile, and Lina’s muttered exclamation. Arthur might be absent from the family circle—he would not be missed; he might fast while others feasted—no one would heed how he fared.

Young Madden was neither indifferent to physical comfort, nor insensible to personal neglect. He left the castle that evening, accompanied by Lina, with a bitter feeling not unmingled with resentment. But that feeling softened as he approached the dwelling, the light from whose diamond-paned windows gleamed so cheerily through the evening shade. The bitter emotion altogether vanished as Arthur crossed the threshold of the steward’s peaceful home, and found himself amongst those who, though divided from him by social distinctions, were yet one in faith, and one in heavenly hope. There was the aged pilgrim bending over his staff, waiting on the brink of Jordan for the welcome summons to cross; there was the firm fearless soldier of Christ who had borne the burden and heat of the day,

and who, even in the time of conflict, had found strength proportioned to his need. There also was the gentle woman whom trial had brought to the feet of her Lord, and who had there learned to rejoice even in tribulation. Surrounded by such as these, Arthur realized something of the truth that one of the Lord's people cannot be alone even in this world; the communion of saints makes a family; the presence of the Saviour, a home.

LECTURE III.—THE MISSION OF MOSES.

In peaceful retirement Moses passed forty years of his life: not wasted years, we are assured, though marked by no striking events. Moses may have marvelled at first why talents formed to shine in a court should be buried in a desert; why he, whom extensive knowledge and natural gifts fitted to become a ruler of men, should be left to be a keeper of sheep. But we not unfrequently see that those who are to occupy stations of extensive usefulness, are fitted for them by a long—and to our blindness it might seem an unnecessary—course of preparation. The gourd and the reed spring up rapidly to maturity; the oak, that is to bear the rough blast, whose close-grained wood is to form the vessel that shall ride on the stormy sea, is very slow in its growth. While Moses was watching his flock on the slopes of Horeb, humility and self-knowledge, more precious than any intellectual gifts, would strike deeper roots into his soul.

It was not until He had passed thirty years in lowly seclusion, that the Son of God Himself began His public ministry in Judea.

Whether the spirit of Moses ever chafed against the trial of obscurity we know not. Before the forty years of retirement had elapsed, every spark of human ambition, if such had ever been kindled in his breast, appears to have died away. We find no self-seeking, no pride in him who was to occupy a more exalted position than that of any monarch upon earth. The honours of leader, lawgiver, and prophet, were to crown the meekest of men.

The time had now come when Moses was to receive his high commission from the Almighty. As he fed his flock on Horeb, *the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire, out of the midst of a bush.* We cannot hesitate in believing this Angel to have been the Eternal Son Himself; no created lips, even of seraph, dare have uttered the words which came forth from the flames which enwrapped the bush, but did not consume it. In describing this solemn interview between a mortal and his Creator, I shall keep very closely to the words of the inspired narrative.

God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses ! Moses ! And he said, Here am I. And He said, draw not nigh hither : put off thy shoes from off thy feet ; for the place whereon thou standest is holy



MOSES WITH HIS FLOCK.

ground. I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God.

And the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry. . . . And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land. . . . unto a land flowing with milk and honey. . . . Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.

Glorious mission, and yet one from which he for whom it was ordained shrank with an overpowering sense of his own insufficiency. *Who am I*, exclaimed Moses, *that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?* Even the gracious assurance, *I will be with thee*, sufficed not to overcome the hesitation of Moses. Difficulties crowded on his mind, arising less from fear of danger to be encountered from Pharaoh, than from the Hebrew's knowledge of the degraded character of the people to whom he was sent. Sunk in Egyptian darkness, what did Israel know of God!

Behold, said Moses, *when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is His Name? what shall I say unto them?*

And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM. Thus shalt thou say to the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.

Let us pause with the deepest reverence here, when the voice of the Almighty proclaims in His Name His own eternal existence! God reveals Himself as He *which is—and was—and is to be*, to whom there is no past, and no future, because He is self-existent and eternal. This name corresponds to that of JEHOVAH, which signifies HE IS, or BEING ITSELF,* which the Jews never would pronounce without sacred awe. It was when our Saviour said to the Jews, *Before Abraham was—I AM*, that they took up stones to stone Him as a blasphemer, who had dared to claim to Himself the incommunicable attribute of God!

Still Moses hesitated and doubted; he feared the unbelief of the people. To overcome this unbelief, to afford the Israelites a convincing proof that he came a messenger from God, Moses was given power to work miracles. Casting his rod on the ground it became a serpent, and when he seized it, again appeared as a rod. His hand, thrust into his bosom, became leprous; and placed there a second time, was drawn forth whole as before.

But even this power of working miracles was not sufficient to give confidence to Moses. He who had been mighty in words and in deeds, now felt discouraged by a sense of his own unfitness for the great mission on which he was sent. *O my Lord, I am not eloquent, he cried, neither heretofore, nor since Thou hast spoken*

* Bishop Beveridge.

to Thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue!

As God in after ages replied to another saint oppressed by sense of infirmity, *My grace is sufficient for thee, for My strength is made perfect in weakness*, so He now deigned to intimate to Moses that He could bestow all powers needed for the work which He Himself had assigned. *Who hath made man's mouth? . . . have not I, the Lord? Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say.*

Still Moses shrank from his difficult mission, until the anger of the Lord was kindled. Humility may be made a cloak for mistrust. Yet had the Lord compassion on the frailty of His servant, and while still sending Moses to Egypt, God gave him the assurance that he should meet his brother Aaron, who should be his spokesman to the people. The Almighty thus graciously granted to His servant the support of human companionship and affection, as in after times the compassionate Saviour sent forth His disciples by two and two.

While in Moses, sent on a mission of mercy to those who sat in darkness and the shadow of death, we see a type of Him who came to seek and to save lost sinners, we feel how immeasurably the self-devotion of the servant fell short of that of his Lord and Master. Difficulties and dangers, the wrath of the Egyptian tyrant, the unbelief of the children of Israel, loomed before the

imagination of the mortal, and he would fain have turned back from the path on which God Himself bade him go forward. The divine Son beheld dark in the future all the anguish which would cloud His mission,—He foresaw rejection, insult, contempt, the fierce assaults of the powers of Hell, the mysterious horrors of Gethsemane, the unutterable torments of the cross! With all this, and more, before Him, what was the spirit in which the Redeemer accepted His mission to man? *Lo I come (in the volume of the book it is written of Me), I delight to do Thy will, O my God!*

And now, dear brethren, from this account of Moses sent on his high and holy embassy, what practical lesson shall we gather? We have not far to look for our spiritual Egypt. Too truly saith the inspired apostle, *The whole world lieth in wickedness*, and no marvel, for Satan was termed by our Lord Himself *the prince of this world*. The nations of the earth groan under the iron yoke of this Pharaoh, who will not willingly, nor without a struggle, let one of his prisoners go. Do you deem that I overstate this fact? Look abroad at heathen nations; see poor idolaters bound in the chain of cruel superstitions; mothers sacrificing their babes; children leaving their aged parents to perish! Remember how Hindu widows were burned alive with the bodies of their husbands; how miserable wretches flung themselves under the crushing wheels of an idol's car! Do not horrors such as

these write as in letters of blood, "Satan is a merciless tyrant, whose service is bondage, and whose wages is death?"

And when we turn to the nations called Christian, proud of their civilization, their knowledge, their noble institutions, do we see nothing of the empire of Satan over the souls and bodies of men! *Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey?* Is not the drunkard a wretched bondsman, chained down by a debasing habit, made lower than the very beasts of the field? Is not the miser a degraded captive, though his fetters be made of gold? What is the state of the man who is slave to his passions, whether they be fierce anger, or gnawing envy, covetousness, pride, or revenge? Is it not a state of danger, a state of degradation? Shame, poverty, sickness, pain, these are the sharp scourges with which Satan lashes his servants; and who can dwell, even in a Christian land, without seeing their effects on every side? On the walls of the hospital, the gates of the prison, on the tombstone over the grave, we may trace the mournful truth—Satan is a merciless tyrant, whose service is bondage, and whose wages is death!

And, alas! within our own hearts we find proofs of the power of this Pharaoh. Evil desires, sinful thoughts, neglect of God's law, doubts of His love, an unsubdued temper, a rebellious will, these are tokens, even to God's

people, that they have entered life, as it were, in Egypt; by nature "born in sin, and the children of wrath." But Christ has broken their yoke; they have been, through grace, *delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.* And now they stand, like Moses at Horeb, in the presence of their gracious Redeemer, and receive His commission to go to their brethren who are still in slavery to sin, and give them a message of peace. They are to tell Satan's bondsmen of Him who was anointed *to preach good tidings, . . . to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.*

But at this point, perhaps, this thought arises in the minds of my hearers: "Is not a mission such as that of Moses confined to ministers and preachers of the gospel? It is the office of missionaries abroad, and of pastors at home, to rouse Satan's bondsmen to struggle for freedom, and to guide them, as God's grace may enable them to do so, towards the heavenly Canaan. But surely with such a mission *we* have nothing to do,—God lays no such command upon us."

Oh, my brethren, think not so lightly either of your duties or of your privileges! Christ likened His kingdom to leaven, which spreads through a mass, from each atom conveying, as it were, its own newly received nature to those which surround it. The Saviour cries to enslaved

and afflicted sinners, *Come unto Me!* The invitation is echoed by His Church. *The Spirit and the Bride say, Come! and let him that heareth say, Come!* Yes, every one who has *heard*, and *received*, and *accepted* Christ's invitation, has this charge to convey it on to others. If the Christian love his Lord, he cannot but long to aid, however feebly, in extending His kingdom in the hearts of men. If the Christian fully prize his own salvation, he cannot but wish that others should likewise be blessed. If the Christian be a disciple of Him who came to save the lost, he cannot but desire, at humble distance, to follow in the steps of his Lord.

But you will ask me in what way can those who are not ministers help in the great work of bringing out souls from the bondage of Satan to the freedom of Christ. There are three especial means by which we may thus serve the Lord,—*efforts, influence, prayers.*

Our use of the first must depend upon circumstances, which vary with each individual. Few of those who now hear me have much money to give to the cause of spreading of the gospel, though I know those of whom I might say, as St. Paul of the ancient Philippians, *Their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality; for to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing.* So also as regards the talent of *time*. Those who have to earn their bread by their labour have usually little time to give to *direct*

efforts to teach the truth. But there are few indeed, if any, who possess the *will* to make some little effort for others, who do not find that God gives with it the power. The book or the tract given or lent, the *word spoken in season*, even such feeble means have been blessed to the conversion of souls. But it is when conscience prompts us to such efforts that we are apt to shrink back like Moses on Horeb. We think on our own weakness, rather than on the strength of Him whom we serve. We cry, *Who am I that I should go?* and forget the promise, *I will be with thee.* We call not to mind that Faith is the rod which, firmly grasped, works miracles still. Not that any one should presumptuously thrust himself forward when God's providence has barred up the way; it is not for the child to instruct the elder, nor the ignorant to assume the office of teacher; true humility must mix with and temper zeal: but oh, my beloved brethren, is there not often much of indolence, indifference, and the fear of man in what we call humility, when souls are perishing round us, and we but thank God that we are not as they are!

Direct efforts are not our only means of working for God; much is done by silent influence, especially the influence of *example*. The servant in the household, the child in the family, the labourer amongst his fellow-men, may each by his example be to others a faithful witness to the truth. If religion makes him honest in his deal-

ings, truthful in his speech, kind to his neighbours, forgiving to his foes, even the worldly and wicked must secretly own, "there is power in that man's religion." He will be like a light set on a hill, to guide the wanderer back to his God.

The third means of converting sinners, one of secret but mighty power, is intercessory prayer; such prayer as would have saved even Sodom, could ten just men have been found within it. This a weapon which even the weakest may wield; the little child can lift up his heart and voice to God; the invalid who cannot rise from her bed of pain, may send up prayers that shall reach the eternal throne. Even the dying can pray. It has been said that "we owe Paul to the prayer of Stephen." If, instead of exposing the sins of our neighbours, we were to pray for forgiveness of these sins—if, instead of condemning transgressors, we were pleading for them with Him in whose hands are the hearts of men, how rich a blessing would descend upon both others and ourselves! Thus it was with Moses, as we shall more clearly show in a future lecture. He besought Israel to turn to the Lord; he besought the Lord to have mercy on Israel. The great deliverer in bringing a nation out of bondage, made earnest *efforts*, set a noble *example*, and poured forth fervent *prayer*. The prayer was answered; the efforts were blessed.

When last we met here, my brethren, the question

before us was this, "What must we *give up* for Christ?" The next which naturally followed was this, "What can we *do* for our Lord?" To each of His servants the heavenly King assigns his appropriate work. Let no duty be declined because it is difficult, or despised because it is small. A mortal may be employed to stay the sun in his course (Joshua x. 12), an angel to bake a cake on the coals (1 Kings xix. 6). Nothing is impossible that God commands, nothing is mean that is done for His sake. To all whom He sends on a mission of mercy, the Lord can give grace to accomplish that mission. What we most need is the ready mind, the glowing faith, which, like the live coal from the altar touching the lips of Isaiah (Isaiah vi. 6-8), shall make us cry, "Here am I; send me!" For such faith and love let us pray. And oh, may the Lord deign to make use of us, feeble instruments though we be, in delivering souls from the bondage of Satan, to be our *joy and crown of rejoicing* in the heavenly Canaan above!





CHAPTER XII.

NEGLECTED DUTIES.



H. Arthur, my mind was full of such glorious thoughts last night as I rested my head on my pillow, and they mingled even with my dreams!" cried Lina, when on the following morning she found her brother alone in the breakfast-room.

"And what were your thoughts?" said Arthur.

"I thought what a sublime thing it must be to receive a mission from God! I wondered how Moses could have hesitated even for a moment when offered such a glorious charge!" Lina's face kindled with enthusiasm as she went on—"Conceive what it was to be commissioned to rouse a whole nation, to lead them forth in triumph, to baffle their cruel foes, to crush the power of the mighty Pharaoh! And, Arthur, Mr. Eardley said that we too might have a mission. I glanced at you when he said it, but your eyes were fixed on the ground.

I have a conviction deep, deep in my heart that you will do great things some day, Arthur," Lina rested both her hands on her brother's arm, and unconsciously pressed it as she spoke; "I believe that you will go on some mission to God's ancient people, those who are in bondage and oppressed even in their own Holy Land. And perhaps I shall be permitted to go with you; there may be work even for a young English girl like me, who longs and pants to do something to aid the noblest of causes!"

"I am glad that you also have been thinking on the subject of our mission, wee thing," said Arthur. "I have been reflecting with shame that I have never yet made the slightest attempt to lead a fellow-creature to God, except by paltry contributions to missions, of money which I did not even miss. There is something which I wish you to do." Lina looked up eagerly, like some young aide-de-camp waiting to receive his first message in the field. "You know," continued Arthur, "that Axe is so far from the castle, that some of the women servants never attend church-at all. It is especially for those thus situated that Mr. Eardley holds his week-day service. I wish you to ask Mrs. Madden to allow some of the maids to attend it."

All the animation which had lighted up Lina's young face faded into an expression of blank disappointment; the pressure of her hands on Arthur's arm relaxed, and

then she withdrew them altogether. Her brother saw that his words had fallen like drops of cold water upon her.

"I would make the little request myself," he observed, "but that I am not in favour at present; besides," he added with a smile, "it seems that a proposal regarding the maid servants would come more appropriately from one of the ladies."

"I certainly am not going to ask a favour of Mrs. Madden," said Lina, coldly walking away to the window; "I thought that you were going to speak to me of some high and holy mission, and it comes down to 'get leave for the maids to attend a cottage lecture.' Why, any child could do that."

"It is a very simple matter indeed," replied Arthur good-humouredly, "but if it be a thing which ought to be done, its being simple is no reason why it should be omitted. I was thinking over neglected duties this morning, and this was the very first which presented itself to my mind."

"I do not see that we have anything to do with it," said Lina; "let Mrs. Madden look after her own household!"

"Mrs. Madden is no unkind mistress, and I do not expect any objection on her part; only she may need to be reminded—"

"I am not going to remind her," said Lina; "it is no business of mine."

Was it no business of hers if a sentence from her lips could afford to a single individual access to a means of grace? They who care not to please their Master in small acts as well as in great, will find that in performing what they may deem "good works" they have really been pleasing themselves.

Further conversation between Arthur and Lina was stopped by the entrance of Mrs. Madden and Cora, the former with a note open in her hand, the latter with another of which she was breaking the seal. The step-mother returned Lina's "good-morning," and shook hands coldly with Arthur, without raising her eyes from her letter.

"So Sir Thomas Brereton is coming down to-day," said the lady in a manner slightly constrained, with her colour a little heightened, and an almost imperceptible quiver in her twinkling bugles. The two girls glanced at each other. Lina slightly raised her brows, Cora as slightly turned down her lips. Mrs. Madden noticed neither, and continued—"I could wish that I had had a day's longer notice; this great straggling place is more fitted out for show than for comfort."

"Arthur has certainly found it so," observed Cora, with a touch of satire; "he has been forced to put up with all the discomforts of tapestry-hangings, and cushions of down, and to tread with stoic foot over the roughness of velvet pile!"

"Certainly Arthur has two of the prettiest rooms in the castle, and the only ones up-stairs which open one into another," said Mrs. Madden, as if a new light had been thrown on the subject. "They are just suited for a guest like Sir Thomas, he will enjoy the beautiful view from the window. You won't mind, Arthur, changing for a time to one of the rooms that look out on the yard?"

Whether Arthur "minded" or not he said nothing, but slightly inclined his head. Lina could hardly restrain her impatience.

"How can he bear it?" she half audibly muttered. The young girl was almost angry with her brother for taking so calmly what she deemed an intentional slight. "He, the flower of the family, to be thrust into any corner to make room for a mere fortune-hunter, a fawning, flattering upstart!"

"Arthur has no pride, no spirit," was the contemptuous thought of Cora, who could not trace the young man's self-command to a higher source. Arthur had consciously and deliberately sacrificed the favour of a worldly woman to a sense of duty, and felt that he had no right to complain of consequences that he had foreseen. Petty trials have less power to chafe when met as an inevitable part of a Christian's chosen lot. The world's neglect or censure, the little annoyances of daily life, the loss of accustomed pleasures or comforts, small worries

that try temper or ruffle self-love, these are as straggling thorns that lie across the path. Those who recognize the truth that such thorns are to be expected, and are not left to skirt the narrow way without some purpose of wisdom, find that they bear fragrant blossoms to solace, as well as prickles to wound. Many of the sharpest are avoided by simply bending the head. As regards small offences, the reverse of the common proverb "Pride feels no pain" is most consonant to the truth: it is pride that feels *most* pain. Dashing the brambles aside with impatient scorn, he is constantly wounded by the double force of their quick recoil.

While Mrs. Madden slowly performed the duties of the breakfast-table, revolving, as she poured the hot water on the tea, the important interview which she would hold with the housekeeper and cook, and Lina spread her bread with a discontented air, thinking how different real life was from her day dreams, Cora read her letter from Lionel.

"So he's not coming back till Monday; wanted to attend the sale of pictures at Phillip's. He says there are rare ones coming to the hammer."

"Really," observed Mrs. Madden, "after what has occurred, Lionel might restrain his fancy for spending. If Mr. Verner gains his suit, I don't know where all the money is to come from."

"Oh, this is interesting! he has seen our lawyer,"

said Cora, whose eyes had been glancing down the page while her stepmother was speaking.

"What says Mr. Barker?" asked Lina with interest, and Arthur, with his untasted breakfast before him, waited somewhat anxiously for the reply.

"This is what Lionel writes: 'Barker is as much disgusted as I am at Arthur's piece of incomprehensible folly in sending that letter to London. He declares that it was the worst move that could have been made, but that it by no means follows that our checkmate should be the result.'"

"That's right! that's a comfort!" ejaculated Lina. Mrs. Madden listened, sugar-tongs in hand, forgetful even of preparations for her expected guest.

"'Barker says that if old Verner were mad as a March hare when he talked all that nonsense to our father, he might have recovered his wits long before he made the disputed will, dated eighteen months later. It is as to the state of his mind then, and not at a previous period, that the verdict must decide. If the evidence expected from Australia be satisfactory, Barker has not a doubt that we shall at once be put into full possession of our rights.'"

Lina clapped her hands. Mrs. Madden smiled complacently as she dropped the suspended lump of sugar into a cup.

With all the buoyancy of hope natural to youth, Cora and Lina at once accepted these words from their lawyer

as his decided opinion that the plaintiff's success in the suit was almost hopeless, and their spirits rose accordingly. Cora remarked, with a glance at her brother, that it was fortunate that the power of some people to do mischief did not equal their inclination. To this, as to other remarks of the kind, Arthur made no reply, adhering firmly to a resolution which he had formed on the subject. He took advantage of a little increased graciousness on the part of his step-mother to make the small request which Lina had refused to proffer. Perhaps Mrs. Madden felt some slight self-reproach for her treatment of one who might soon be the possessor of thirty thousand pounds, and wished to smooth down his ruffled feelings, for she gave a cheerful consent, and bade Lina tell such of the servants as were disengaged at the hour that they had her permission to attend Mr. Eardley's cottage-meetings.

After the conclusion of the breakfast, Arthur went to his own apartments, to make preparations for his move. He had not been many minutes in his study before he was joined by Lina.

"I have no patience for this!" exclaimed the impetuous girl, as she found her brother gathering together the books which he intended to take with him to his new quarters. "You to be turned unceremoniously out of your rooms, and for that odious Sir Thomas! Any attic would have done for him!"

"Mrs. Madden does not think so," said Arthur.

"Mrs. Madden!" echoed Lina, in a tone which was certainly not one of respect; "we all know well enough what will come of this visit! How Sir Thomas will appear sleek and downy, and make himself very agreeable, as doubtless the young cuckoo-bird does at first in the hedge-sparrow's nest; and then find the fledglings exceedingly in his way, and take the earliest opportunity of politely shoving them out! We all know the end of the story," she added, with a bitter laugh. "Luckily in our case the birds are so fully fledged, that they'll not break their necks by the fall; they will fly away on the wings of very comfortable incomes. You and I, Arthur, may bask on the sunny slopes of Lebanon, quite undisturbed by the knowledge that Sir Thomas is lording it in Castle Lestrange, and that his squad of awkward school-boys are trampling down the flower-beds, and making the place uninhabitable with their shouting and noise. I suppose that Cora will set up in London; and as for Lionel—"

"I wish that you would give up castle-building, Lina," said her brother gravely; "it makes present duties more tiresome, and future trials more heavy."

"You are always expecting trials!" cried Lina.

"I would not have us build up our fabric of hopes without trying the foundation on which they rest, or the higher we build the greater the fall," observed Arthur.

He was more annoyed than he chose to show at the coming of Sir Thomas, and the probable result of his visit. Any future union of the wealthy widow with this needy, money-loving man, would almost certainly deprive Arthur's sisters of their present luxurious home; and what years of toil must elapse before he himself could offer them the shelter even of one the most humble! Arthur could hardly endure to look at his fair, bright young sister, and think of the future before her; the image of the invaded nest rested painfully on his mind, for he felt that two at least of the nestlings were utterly unfledged, unsuited alike by habits of luxury, and tempers undisciplined by trial, to meet the shock of adversity, or endure the hardships of life.

"What a pretty collection of books you have!" exclaimed Lina, who did not choose to pursue a theme which had become disagreeable; "they are so well chosen, and all so splendidly bound! Why, what can have made you treat your old friend the 'Pilgrim's Progress' so badly?" she cried, taking up a volume which Arthur had that morning neatly covered with thick brown paper. "Did you think the dress of purple and gold too gay for the pilgrim, that you have wrapped him up in such sackcloth attire?"

Arthur smiled, and shook his head.

"You must have had some reason!" cried Lina; "and you shall tell that reason to me. I never knew



THE COVERED VOLUME.

you disfigure a pretty volume in that fashion before."

"I merely covered the book to preserve it. I am going to lend it to John the groom," said Arthur.

"Lend! what! one of your elegant books? Well, I am surprised!" cried Lina; "you who are so particular that it would disturb your philosophy if so much as a fly walked across one of the covers! You will never care to touch that volume again, with the mark of John's black fingers in every page, and the scent of the

stable upon it! What can have put that notion of lending into your brain?"

"Mr. Eardley's words," replied Arthur, "connected with my chancing to find John reading an infidel paper. Here is a mind that will feed itself on something, thought I—with poison in default of anything better. I have wholesome food in my little library, and I shut it up and keep it to myself. Here is another neglected duty."

"But no one can expect you to lend your beautiful books to servants," said Lina; "why not send to London for common editions?"

"Because, situated as I now am," said Arthur, with a slight contraction of his brow, "I feel that I have no right unnecessarily to spend even a shilling."

Lina petulantly threw down upon the table the book which she had been holding in her hand.

"*You* spare your shillings!—*you* count your pence! You never can do it—you never were made for such meanness!" she cried. "You'll be talking next of selling your books, and taking your watch and studs to the pawnbroker's!"

"It may come to that," thought Arthur; but he had no wish to inflict more pain, so he dropped the subject, and bore the burden of his cares alone.



CHAPTER XIII.

THE CHILD OF THE HAMLET.



F the reader who now glances over these pages be one who has long been engaged in labours of love; if he has been for years a visitor in the cottage or the poorhouse, scattering broadcast religious literature—seeds in the soil of the human mind—making habitually work for God part of the business of life, he may smile at any mention being made of an act so commonplace and trivial as the lending of a book. Yet if he can recall his own first entrance as a labourer into the vineyard, unpractised, ignorant, half-ashamed—if he can remember how he felt when offering his *first* tract, speaking his *first* word for God, perhaps even such a trifle as this may seem not altogether unworthy of notice. If the reader has been brought up in an actively religious family, he may be quite unable to recall a time when such little acts cost him the slightest effort; but such will not be the case

if, like Arthur, he has dwelt in a house where ridicule is certain to follow the smallest attempt to help in the work of saving souls. In that wondrous picture of man's inner life drawn by John Bunyan, it appears to me that Faithful's being annoyed by Shame, from whose companionship Christian was free, denotes not only a difference between the characters, but also between the social position of the two pilgrims. It may be more difficult to an officer to speak ten serious words to a private, or a young man of fortune to his groom, than to a minister engaged in his sacred office to address a most crowded audience. The small duties are often set aside altogether, ostensibly because they are so trivial, really because their performance is so repugnant to our inclinations. Yet surely those who are nearest to us, those over whom our influence most extends, are the beings for whose spiritual welfare we are most bound to care—those whom we should most seek to draw towards God by our efforts, example, and prayers!

The thought of the Christian's mission was still on the mind of Arthur, when, at the noonday hour, he bent his steps, not towards his favourite wooded glades, or the hill that commanded the finest prospect, but along the pathway, little trodden, that led in the direction of Wildwaste. He passed the picturesque cottage of Holdich, with its honeysuckle-covered porch, and its garden bright with flowers, and caught a glimpse through the open

door of the steward's wife preparing her husband's noon-day meal, humming to herself, as she did so, a low soft song, which blended pleasantly with the murmur of the bees and the distant lowing of cattle. That cottage looked to Arthur as if the sunshine would always rest on it; to him that lowly home of piety and peace appeared a spot consecrated to God. There was far more of real happiness in the cottage than in the castle.

The Lestrange estate did not extend far in this direction. Arthur soon reached a stile which marked its boundary. Over this stile he vaulted, and then found himself on the edge of a tract of wild moorland, broken by slight inequalities of ground, and dotted with patches of gorse, brier, and broom, with here and there pools of stagnant water bordered with rushes. The land was too marshy for cultivation; though the weather was dry and warm, the deep ruts in the cart-tracks that crossed the waste showed that the soil was boggy and soft, and that the roads, indifferent in autumn, might become impassable in winter. There was no building to be seen in the foreground; but within a mile rose a tall unsightly chimney belonging to a soap manufactory, which was an annoyance to more than one sense—sufficient to prevent any from living in its close neighbourhood, except the families of the workmen employed. These poor people dwelt in a cluster of hovels under the shadow of the smoke-cloud from the manufactory, breath-

ing the air which it polluted. Neither church nor chapel was near. There was nothing in the hamlet of Wildwaste to attract the tourist, or to induce the idle pedestrian to bend his footsteps thither. No one would go there in search of the beautiful, the picturesque, or the antique. Those who drove past in a carriage, as Cora and Lina had done, gave but a look of disgust, and observed, "What a wretched, neglected place!"

Taking the tall chimney as his land-mark, Arthur proceeded in the direction of the hamlet. He had no definite scheme in visiting Wildwaste; but his prayer that morning had been, "Show me what Thou wouldst have me to do." And as he rose from his knees, Wildwaste, the miserable district described by his sisters, had recurred to his memory. Perhaps he might induce some one there to attend Mr. Eardley's cottage-meetings; this was the only idea connected with usefulness which took definite shape in the young man's mind. He had not the means of relieving want, and as for combating ignorance or vice, Arthur had as little intention of taking on himself the office of a constable as that of a teacher.

As Arthur pursued the path across the common, his eye was attracted by the picturesque effect of a little scarlet cloak, contrasting with the green of a clump of gorse and fern. The cloak, which on nearer approach was seen to be both soiled and tattered, was wrapped

round a bare-headed child, whom Arthur judged by her size to be about six years of age, though she was probably older. He looked at the little slender creature, with her dark hair hanging in elf-locks over her shoulders, and her large gazelle-like eyes fixed on the stranger with a shy, half frightened expression, and wished that he had brought his sketch-book with him. Arthur expected that the child would ask alms, for her dress denoted poverty, and he intuitively put his hand to his waistcoat pocket; but the little girl slunk away at his approach to a short distance from the path, where she stopped, watching him as he passed. Then, at the distance of about twenty yards, she timidly followed in his footsteps, holding close to her little bosom a covered basket which she carried. Arthur stopped, to give the child an opportunity of coming up with him; but seeing this, she stopped also: when he walked on, she followed, preserving still the same distance between them. Curious to see if the little girl's movements were really connected with his own, Arthur diverged to the right, still, however, going somewhat in the direction of the hamlet. He stopped and glanced back; the child, though with a look of uncertainty and hesitation, was following him still.

"This little fawn seems to be afraid to come near me, and yet to wish to keep me in sight," said Arthur to himself. The young man was fond of children, and

resolved to overcome the shyness of this lonely little peasant. He turned towards her, smiled, and beckoned to her to advance. She hung back with evident reluctance. Arthur stooped and gathered from a bramble by the path a spray richly hung with blackberries, and held it out to the child. The timid girl slowly approached, like the wild fawn to which Arthur had likened her, keeping her black eyes fixed on the stranger. But there was that in Arthur's smile which no child could look on and fear. As the little one put out her brown hand for the berries, she glanced up with more confidence through her long dark lashes at the tall form before her.

"Why did you follow me, my little maiden?" asked Arthur.

"'Cause I was afeerd of the boys," said the child. "If you was by, they'd not beat me, and take away my white hen." The girl glanced down at her covered basket, and a little fluttering sound from within showed the nature of its contents.

"Who are these boys that you fear?"

"The big bad boys as hunt Gideon," replied the child, glancing timidly round, as if afraid that some one might be within hearing.

"Hunt Gideon!" repeated Arthur, amused to hear a boy spoken of as if he were a hare. "Does Gideon always run away, does he never turn round and face them?"

"He has the fits, you know," said the little girl sadly; "the boys hunt him, and fright him, and then he falls down, and it makes mother so savage—it do!"

"It would make any one feel savage," observed Arthur; "these boys must be a sad lawless set."

"They caught me the first time I was a-comin' from Mrs. 'Oldit, and took away the cake she gave me, and ate it, and tore the pretty picture book into bits, and laughed, and when I cried they beat me!" The little girl completed the list of her wrongs by drawing up her ragged sleeve, and showing the mark of a black bruise beneath.

"Here's a case of Red Ridinghood and the wolf," thought Arthur; "I should like to give these young ruffians a taste of my switch! Well, my little friend," he said aloud, "keep close beside me, and we'll go together to your home, and none of the boys shall touch you. Tell me, what is your name?"

"Lottie Stone, sir," answered the child, her little face brightening as she trotted on in full confidence under the protection of the tall stranger, whose rich-toned voice and gentle courtesy had a winning charm for one accustomed to witness only the brutal manners of some of the most lawless men in the county.

"Do you ever go to church, Lottie Stone?"

The girl looked as if she did not understand the ques-

tion, so Arthur changed it. "Where does your father go to on Sundays?" he asked.

"He goes to the 'Jolly Gardener,'" said the child sadly; "he goes there on other days—every day—but on Sunday he's there all day long, and when he comes home he beats mother, and he sometimes beats Gideon and me."

"Poor little Red Ridinghood!" murmured Arthur to himself, "the wolf is at home as well as abroad. Does your mother teach you to read?" he inquired.

"No, mother don't teach me nothink," naively answered the child.

"What—not to speak truth, and fear God?"

The girl fumbled with her blackberries, and Arthur at first thought that she had either not heard or not understood his question; but she presently raised her head and replied, "It's Mrs. 'Oldit as teach me that."

"And do you often see Mrs. Holdich?"

"I goes there pretty often," prattled the child; "I likes to go there, for she gives me milk, and bread, and shows me a deal, and she gave me this pretty hen. I'd be there every day, only I don't like a-going 'cross the common, cause of the bad boys, yer know."

"And what does kind Mrs. Holdich teach you?"

"Big A, and O, and B; and she tells me pretty stories out of the Bible—I loves Mrs. 'Oldit, I does. She was a-going to show me how to mend up them

holes"—Red Ridinghood glanced down at her ragged drees—"but mother said it warn't no use, they'd be torn again directly."

"And does she ever tell you—" Arthur was interrupted by Lottie's drawing closer to him in evident fear, and murmuring, "There's some of 'em!—big Davy, and Jack Thomson, and Tommy Higgs."

"Don't mind them, you've nothing to be afraid of," said Arthur, encouraging his little companion.

"They may kill my hen, as they killed our poor kitten!" faltered Lottie, as they approached the spot where three dirty ragged boys, stretched on the turf, were amusing themselves in tearing off the legs and wings of some wretched butterflies that they had caught.

"I say, my lads," cried Arthur Madden, "how many butterflies could the smallest of you kill in five minutes?"

The authoritative tone and the commanding presence of the speaker arrested the attention of the young ragamuffins. Davy's mouth expanded in a broad grin as he answered, "Bushels of 'em, if we could get 'em."

"Yes, one child could take the life of thousands of butterflies," said Arthur, "but how many men would it require to give back life to a single insect?"

The boys all stared at a question so strange and unexpected; then Thomson muttered, "There's no one could do it."

"No; life is God's gift alone, and no one should wantonly take it away from one of the beautiful creatures that He has made to enjoy it," said Arthur.

This was evidently a very new doctrine to the ragged audience. Had not the speaker been "a tall grand gentleman," he would probably have been answered by



ARTHUR AND THE BOYS.

a roar of laughter; as it was, Davy relaxed his hold on the wings of a struggling captive, and the insect made its escape, no one attempting to catch it again.

"It always appears to me to be a cowardly thing to hurt anything just because it is feeble and weak, and

cannot resist," said Arthur, who had an object in speaking beyond that of saving butterflies. "It is the office of the strong to protect the weak, of the bold to take care of the timid. I knew a man, an officer, who when in India went hunting on foot a lion that had carried off a poor child."

"He was a bold chap, he was," muttered Davy.

"Did the lion kill him?" asked Tom.

"No, he killed the lion," said Arthur; "and I've seen the head stuffed, and the great white fangs that could have torn a horse in pieces. Now, that officer was a true-hearted brave Englishman, he dared attack a lion, but he would not have trodden on a worm. He was not afraid to ride up to the enemy's cannon, but as for torturing an insect or frightening a girl, he would have blushed to do such a cowardly thing."

Whether Arthur had convinced the reason of the boys may be doubted, but he had certainly gained their attention; he felt his advantage and went on. "Now I should be sorry to think that there was not a fine brave fellow amongst you. Here's a little girl who is afraid to cross the common alone; would not one of you go with her, and take care of her, and if any big blustering coward tried to frighten or hurt her, knock down the bully at once?"

"Yes, I would—I would," cried the boys one after the other.

"There, you hear them," said Arthur to Lottie, scarcely able to keep his countenance as he spoke; "there you have three protectors to choose from whenever you chance to want one, who will protect you as brave boys should. Good-day to you, my lads," he continued, turning courteously to the three boys; "may you grow up to be as gallant fellows as my friend the officer, and kill your lion, as he did, if ever you come across one."

Arthur strode rapidly on to hide his mirth, followed by the wondering Lottie, who could not comprehend how the gentleman had suddenly turned her tormentors into her champions.

"I say, he's a fine tall chap," observed Davy; "I daresay he's been and killed a lion himself."

"He's a-stoopin' and talkin' to Lottie Stone!" observed Tommy with surprise; "he'd be a-whacking any one as hurt her!"





CHAPTER XIV.

A VISIT TO WILDWASTE.



MEANWHILE Arthur, with his little Red Riding-hood trotting beside him, pursued his way to the hamlet where rose the tall brick chimney with its cloud of black smoke of no fragrant description.

“How can you bear to live constantly close to such a scent as that?” exclaimed the young man, whose easy luxurious life had ill prepared him for any annoyance of the kind.

“We bears it 'cause we can't help it,” said Lottie, naively; Arthur smiled, for he thought that there was more philosophy in the reply than there had been wisdom in the question. He was just wondering to himself whether human ingenuity could have devised a place more unattractive than Wildwaste hamlet, with its hideous manufactory, its tumble-down cottages, its staring public-house, and the heaps of dust and dirt that

encumbered what ought to have been neat gardens, when a shrill shriek from one of the cottages, a shriek of terror or of pain, made him start, and realize that there might be something in Wildwaste worse than scent of melting tallow, or sight of desolation and dirt.

"Oh, it's mother—father's at her!" cried Lottie in terror. Arthur sprang forward to the door of the cottage whence shriek after shriek now proceeded.

What he beheld within it, filled him with indignation and disgust. A powerful-looking workman, dirty, unshaven, and evidently under the excitement of liquor, had struck again and again a wretched woman who was crouching before him, with her black hair hanging wildly about her, and stains of blood on her face, which wore an expression of terror such as Arthur had never seen in human countenance before. No marvel, for her brutal husband, not satisfied with the blows already dealt by his strong hand, had just snatched up the poker from the fire-place, with evident intention to bring down its crushing weight on his miserable victim! Two or three men were looking on near the door, but not interfering, save by muttering, "He'll kill her," "he'll do for her," "he's a brute:" probably none of them was inclined to risk having his brains dashed out by the heavy iron in the grasp of the furious drunkard.

But no thought of personal risk stopped Arthur for a moment. With one bound he cleared the space between

them, confronted the ruffian, his weaponless hand up-raised as if to arrest the force of a blow, his eyes flashing with indignation, while loud and stern rang his exclamation, "Are you a man, to strike a defenceless woman!"

Abner Stone—such was the ruffian's name—was startled by the sudden appearance of the stranger, who, young as he was, carried with him an air of authority which often commands obedience. With his weapon still raised, the half-intoxicated man stared in stupid surprise at the bold intruder, met the indignant glance of young Madden's eyes and cowered beneath it, as the maniac is said to do under the gaze of one gifted with reason.

"Drop that!" exclaimed Arthur in a determined tone, "and thank God that you have not the stain of murder on your hand."

To the surprise of the lookers-on, the man's hold on the poker relaxed, his arm dropped, the iron fell clanging on the floor. It was as if a slave had instinctively obeyed the command of a master. Arthur himself stood astonished at his own success; the triumph of moral over physical force.

"She shouldn't ha' been a-provoking me—she has such a tongue," muttered the workman, who now became uncomfortably aware of the presence of other witnesses. "Get along with ye—all of ye!" he added, suddenly

turning and walking with unsteady step to the door. He staggered out into the air, no one attempting to stay him, lest the arrested tide of his fury should be turned into some new channel.

"That fellow should be bound over to keep the peace—taken before a magistrate," said Arthur, as soon as the cottage was freed from the presence of its dangerous inmate.

"Taken afore a magistrate—my husband—the breadwinner of the family!" exclaimed the wife of Stone in shrill accents of displeasure. She had risen to her feet, and was parting back the tangled clotted masses of her hair from her bruised and bleeding face. "It's a good husband he is, when he's sober—'twould be a cruelty and a shame, it would, to have him up afore a justice!"

"A true woman!" thought Arthur, readily forgiving the want of gratitude towards himself, in consideration of that clinging conjugal affection. He felt, however, thoroughly disgusted with the scene in which he had found himself so unexpectedly an actor, and had a strong inclination to turn his back for ever on Wildwaste and the dwellers therein.

"Look to your mother's hurts, Lottie," he said to the child, who pale and trembling stood on the threshold; and as Arthur passed through the doorway he sternly observed to the men loitering without, "Such a scene as

this is a disgrace to a Christian land! How could you look on to see a woman murdered before your eyes?"

"It's a crying shame, it is, sir," said a man whose appearance and manner showed him to be of a different class from the rest. Tychicus Bolder was the owner of the only shop in Wildwaste, which was nearly opposite to the dwelling of the Stones. His shop was of that kind often met with in country places: its stores of tea and all sorts of coarser groceries, with tobacco, needles, tapes and pins, red cotton handkerchiefs, pots and pans, supplied the humble but varied wants of the hamlet. Tychicus was a short, rather elderly man, with smoke-dried skin, and furrowed brow, and short crisp hair of iron-gray colour. He was the only person who did not now slink away, when "the row" was all over. He seemed rather anxious to enter into conversation with the stranger.

"It's all the curse that comes of the drink, sir," he continued, pointing to the house of lath and plaster, with the sign of a gaudy nosegay swinging in front, which towered above all the dwellings near, except the red brick manufactory which was at the further end of the hamlet. "As long as Dan Ford keeps that public—a devil-trap I call it—and baits it for the misguided idiots that fling half their wages into his till, so long will quarrelling and fighting, and misery and murder be common things in Wildwaste."

Arthur and Tychicus had crossed the road, on either side of which lay the dwellings of the hamlet, and had now reached the door of Bolder's shop. As Arthur was not sorry to find a sober, sensible man who was ready to give information, he followed Tychicus Bolder into the place, so that the conversation might be continued without interruption.

"You may have heard of that Ford, sir," continued the tradesman, "if, as I take it, you come from the castle. He was gardener there to Sir Digby for years, and might have been so to this day, had not Robert Holdich, the steward, found him out for the villain he is, and boldly exposed him, and got him turned off in disgrace. But Ford had feathered his nest, and having cheated his master of a good round sum, he set up as a publican here, though one would have thought, after all that had passed, the fellow wouldn't have cared to have shown his face again in the county. He bought that house, he did—premises, ground, furniture and all." Tychicus, with some excitement, pointed across the road to where the sign of the "Jolly Gardener" swung in the wind. "They say that ill-gotten money never thrives; he'll double his soon enough, for I take it that half the earnings of the 'hands' hereabouts is thrown away at that house. I'm a teetotaller, sir," Tychicus struck his counter as he made the announcement; "I never wet my throat with the fiery poison that destroys body and soul

together, and it grieves my soul to see men that might be honest, respectable, and happy, bringing their 'fools' pence' to that place, and to hear the drunken riot and profane songs, and quarrelling and fighting that goes on far into the night."

"It is a great evil," observed Arthur.

"Evil! it's the parent of all evils," exclaimed the excited grocer. "There was John Styles lost in the bog last winter, not fifty yards from his home, because he was so blind drunk that he could not find it, and he's left widow and children on the parish. There was another 'hand' killed in a fight not long since, and two are now in prison for almost knocking each other to pieces in a drunken brawl;—why, sir, to look no further, if Providence had not brought you here this day, there would have been a battered corpse in yon cottage to-night, and a murderer in Portly jail."

There was startling truth in this, and Arthur inwardly thanked God that his steps had been guided to Wildwaste.

"But is there no remedy for these evils?" he asked; "does no one attend to the place? The clergyman—"

"Old and gouty he is now," interrupted Tychicus, and he was never very go-ahead in his best days. There's scarce a soul in this place that ever enters a church or sees a parson. Half the children have never been baptized, and they know no more than heathens. It would be

different if they were under Mr. Eardley—he's one of the parsons that work."

"But are you aware that Mr. Eardley has prayers and a lecture twice a week not a mile from hence, at the cottage of Holdich the steward?"

"Oh ay, yes," said the grocer slowly, rubbing his grizzled chin; "Holdich told me; on Tuesdays and Fridays."

"I do not remember seeing you there," observed Arthur.

"So you go, sir, do you?" said the grocer. "Well, I daresay that the meetings are very good things, if a gentleman like you attends them. It's not always convenient to a man that has business to go a mile to attend one, but I daresay you'll see me there next Tuesday."

"And could you not bring others with you?" said Arthur, catching at the hope that the attendance of Bolder might be the narrow point of the wedge which he wished to drive home; "you might persuade some to go and hear the gospel."

"Bless you, sir," exclaimed the grocer, "you know nothing of this sort of people. I beg your pardon, but you're young in the world. They won't go to hear the gospel; it's the gospel must be brought here to them."

"But how—" commenced Arthur; his talkative companion answered the question before the young man could finish his sentence.

"I'll give you a notion how, sir. Last winter Mr. Bull—he's our vicar, you know—went for his health up to London, and he got a London curate to do his duty, and take his place while he was away. Now that young parson was not one to let the grass grow under his feet. He went here and there, and found his way even to Wildwaste, and what must he do but set up a bit of a school in my shed hard by, and the boys came fast enough, for they thought it grand to be taught by a clergyman. I've some of the books and the slates which they used by me now; maybe they'll be wanted some day. And Mr. Vaughan went from cottage to cottage, he did, and got a dozen or more of the people to go to church while he preached there; somehow or other he seemed to win their hearts. But he only stayed three months down here, you see, sir, and when he went away, everything fell into the old ruts, and then Ford came and set up his public, and matters got worse and worse. But if some gentleman like you, sir, would come and talk to the lads, and teach them a bit, they'd come like needles to the magnet, and you might get some of them to take the pledge, and that would be the making of them, you know."

Arthur drew back a little; nothing could be more repugnant to him than the idea of teaching a horde of little savages at Wildwaste, where the sickening odour from the manufactory, blending with other scents yet

more disgusting, corresponded but too well with the moral atmosphere which pervaded the place.

"I could not undertake anything of the sort," he said quickly; "my own stay at the castle is most uncertain, my time is occupied, I have never attempted to do work of the kind."

"Oh! I beg your pardon; I meant no offence," said the grocer, bowing; "only you seemed to take such an interest in the matter. I just meant to say that any gentleman as would teach the boys here to read their Bibles, and keep from drinking, would be welcome to the use of my shed, and the books, and the benches; and if there's anything in my line of business wanted at the castle," Bolder glanced complacently round his store, "I'll always be proud to serve you."

Arthur, having no wish to continue the colloquy, especially after it had taken this very business-like turn, bade the grocer good-morning, and quitted the shop. He found a knot of boys on the common, evidently waiting for his coming. The report of his conduct in Stone's cottage had already been spread abroad, and the lads whom he had addressed when escorting Lottie, were now convinced that he must be the hero of his own lion adventure.

"Bill says as how Stone was mad drunk, and was a killin' his wife, and yon tall gemman twisted the big poker out of his hand as if he'd been a baby."

"No, but he didn't," interrupted another; "the gem-man just looked him hard in the face, and he dropped the poker like a hot potato; it's a power he has in his eye.

"And look ye, here he's acomin'; I wonders if he'll be speakin' to us agen."

Arthur saw all the eager young eyes fixed upon him as he came up to the boys; such as had caps touched them—such as had none pulled their rugged fore-locks instead. To their great delight Arthur Madden returned their greeting by raising his hat.

"You will not forget your promise, my lads," he said, addressing himself to the three whom he had constituted the protectors of little Lottie.

Three mouths expanded in broad grins. "No, sir, no," answered the boys.

"And there's something else I want you to do," said Arthur, taking advantage of his newly-acquired popularity; "I want you to come next Tuesday at seven to the cottage of Holdich the steward, and you'll hear there of a brave man who dared to go boldly before a great tyrant, and force him to set free a number of slaves. Will you come there, my boys, and meet me?"

"Yes, sir, yes," cried the rough-haired little rabble, to whom a promise cost nothing.

Arthur walked slowly and thoughtfully across the common on his return to the castle. Very mingled were

his feelings. It was a relief to turn his back on Wildwaste, but he could not throw off from his mind the recollection of it and its miserable inmates. Here, indeed, were an oppressed people, groaning under worse than Egyptian bondage, the bondage of ignorance, misery, and sin. But why should the thought of these strangers lie like a burden upon Arthur; why should he dislike to recall even the readiness with which he had been listened to, the rough courtesy with which he had been received? Arthur could hardly have given a reason for this vague, uneasy sensation, till Lina, the only person to whom he related his adventure, playfully exclaimed, "Now I suppose that you will be thinking that you have a mission to Wildwaste." She had unconsciously touched a painful point. Arthur repeated to himself again and again that he had nothing to do with the place, that in all probability he would very soon go to London, that it would be worse than useless to begin a work which must so soon be abandoned. He usually silenced conscience thus for a time, but it was strange how often the inward monitor suggested the same thoughts again, as if not wholly satisfied with the answer already given. The image of Stone's wife with the look of terror in her blood-stained face, Lottie's wistful black eyes, even the unwashed countenances of the rough untutored boys would rise before the mind of Arthur, when he sat in his room with his books before

him, and even in the midst of the social circle he found himself thinking of Wildwaste. It is said that "circumstances are the voice of Providence;" if so, might not that voice be heard in the very peculiar circumstances which had attended Arthur's first visit to the hamlet? Led, casually as it were, towards that spot of darkness, at a most critical moment, he had done more for others in the space of a few seconds than he had done before through the course of his whole life. He had made an impression on ignorant minds; he seemed, to his own surprise, to exercise some kind of influence over them; had this influence been given for nothing; might not the call to speak to those thus made ready to listen be really a call from God? Arthur did not wish to think so; he repeated to himself that he was utterly unaccustomed to, and totally unfitted for, such work. *I am not eloquent; send by the hand of him whom Thou wilt send.* It was the old excuse of an unwilling mind, shrinking back from a mission that it loved not. How many of us have our Wildwastes beside us! how many of us have heard the voice, *Go, labour in My vineyard*, and have shrunk from obeying the call, fondly trying to persuade ourselves that it is addressed to others—not to ourselves! It must be thus—or why are ragged schools lacking teachers, workhouses lacking visitors, Satan maintaining undisputed possession of dark haunts in a Christian land? Well may we adopt as our own


the dying prayer of Usher, "O Lord, forgive me my sins, *especially my sins of omission!*"

In the course of the day on which Arthur had visited Wildwaste, Sir Thomas Brereton arrived. He was a tall, good-looking, middle-aged man, with a large pair of sandy-coloured whiskers. A very constant smile played on his lips, and he displayed a readiness to see everything *couleur de rose*, at least at Castle Lestrange, and in the presence of its bland mistress. On Arthur, in the absence of his brother, devolved the duties of hospitality belonging to the gentlemen of the house. He performed them with natural courtesy, though feeling the tax upon his time irksome, and the society of the guest uncongenial. To none of the younger Maddens was Sir Thomas a welcome visitor; they regarded his manner as fawning, and his compliments fulsome, especially those which were lavished upon their step-mother. Probably the vision of the five or six schoolboys who might be expected at no remote period to follow in the train of their father, and fill places then otherwise occupied, did not tend to make Mrs. Madden's guest a greater favourite with the family of her late husband.





CHAPTER XV.

 "Of course, Arthur dearest, you cannot possibly attend the cottage-lecture this evening," said Lina to her brother on the morning of the following Tuesday.

"No? and why not?" asked Arthur quietly, closing the book which he had been reading.

"Why—when Sir Thomas is here, and the Brindsleys and Partons coming to dinner at seven, you could not possibly be absent at that hour."

"Lionel is here," replied Arthur; and he added with a peculiar smile, "you did not hear Mrs. Madden mourning over odd numbers and 'unlucky thirteen,' till the thought happily struck her of 'Arthur's prayer-meeting night,' which restored her serenity at once!"

"You do not mean to say that she gave you such a broad hint to absent yourself from the first dinner-party given at the castle!"

"Don't look so indignant, wee thing. It is better that I should be absent. No one will miss me but your-

self. My own brother and sister will not speak to me, even when we are seated at the same table."

"It is a burning shame!" exclaimed Lina; "but when once this hateful law-business is happily over all will be smoothed down between you. In the meantime, you are not one to be browbeaten, or driven from the place which is your right."

"I hope to live down hatred," replied her brother, "however our fortunes may turn. There is another reason besides that which I have mentioned, for my attending the meeting to-night. I expect to see some there who have never been present before, and who, if discouraged, may never be present again. They come on my persuasion; and if I were away to-night, they would probably in future make my absence an excuse for their own. It is this that determines me to go."

"You don't mean the talkative grocer, and the ragged urchins from Wildwaste!" exclaimed Lina, bursting into a silvery laugh, which, musical as it was, annoyed her brother not a little. "O Arthur, this is really too absurd! You are to be absent from dinner, not to come in till dessert, like some good little nursery child; and when our guests ask the reason of your absence, we must refer them to Mr. Tychicus Bolder, the dealer in coffee, tea, and tobacco!" Seeing the frown on her brother's brow, Lina turned her bantering tone into one of playful

reproach. "You know, dearest, how vexed I was when you sent that letter to London, and yet I could admire your high sense of honour, your loftiness of soul, and the more I grieved, the more I loved you. But this is quite a different thing. I don't like you to stoop, to put yourself in a position beneath your dignity. I could bear, though it's hard, to see you hated, but I can't bear to see you despised!"

Arthur's frown had passed from his brow. He took his sister's hand between both of his own, and looked earnestly into her eyes as he answered—"The same principle which made me risk the one, must make me not afraid of the other, sweet Lina. You, my own darling sister, must be my helper and not my hinderer; I want simply to do what my conscience tells me is right, let who will reproach, or hate, or despise me!"

So on that evening Arthur Madden again appeared under the humble roof of the steward. He was glad to see Tychicus Bolder making one of the little assembly, a look of attention on his hard, dry face, as he sat leaning both hands on his stick. Three of the servants from the castle also were present, having gladly availed themselves of permission to go to the only kind of religious service which they now could attend. But Tychicus was the only individual from Wildwaste who had crossed the common on that evening; Arthur looked in vain for his ragged recruits. He remembered and felt the truth

of the words, "They won't go to hear the gospel, it's the gospel that must be brought here to them."

LECTURE IV.—MOSES BEFORE PHARAOH.

In the name of the Lord, and in the strength of the Lord, Moses and Aaron entered the land of Goshen in Egypt, and, gathering together all the elders of Israel, spake God's word, and wrought the miracles which were the seal to its truth. The people listened and obeyed; they bowed their heads and worshipped. The word, like the seed on the stony ground, was at first received with joy by those who heard it.

The more formidable duty of facing the tyrant Pharaoh now devolved on the brothers. Boldly the ambassadors of the Most High appeared before the haughty monarch of Egypt, to discharge their sacred commission, and command him in God's name to let the children of Israel go. But very different was the effect of their words upon the proud soul of the king.

Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go! exclaimed the haughty Pharaoh. And to mark his displeasure at any attempt having been made to light up hope of freedom in the minds of his wretched bondsmen, he commanded that their yoke should be made yet heavier. While forced to perform, as before, their task of brick-making for the tyrant, the Israelites

were no longer to be provided with straw for burning their bricks, but they were to find the straw for themselves. The over-worked slaves remonstrated in vain : when they failed to complete their task, their overseers were subjected to the shame and torture of the scourge. The short gleam of hope which had brightened the gloom of the sons of Israel gave place to darker misery and despair. In keen disappointment they complained of Moses and Aaron as of those who had done them a wrong ; and Moses, grieved by their sufferings and wounded by their reproaches, poured out his soul in bitterness to God : *Lord, wherefore hast Thou so evil entreated this people ? why is it that Thou hast sent me ? For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in Thy Name, he hath done evil to this people ; neither hast Thou delivered Thy people at all.*

The prayer savoured of a murmuring spirit, and yet it brought a gracious reply. Moses was again sent on his solemn mission to Pharaoh, with a command to work miracles in the sight of the godless king. The rod of Aaron cast upon the ground became a serpent. But Pharaoh's resolution remained unmoved. He called for his sorcerers, and they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents ; * but Aaron's rod swallowed

* It is not necessary to suppose that any supernatural influence was exerted (by the sorcerers). The Egyptian priesthood excelled all the ancients in the production of those effects and illusions which are connected with every system of pagan worship.—KITTO.

Either they became real serpents, God permitting those sorcerers to work by the assistance of evil spirits, . . . or the sorcerers brought real serpents in the place of their rods which they conveyed away.—BISHOPS PATRICK and KIDDER ; DR. WELLS.

up the rods of the Egyptians. Pharaoh hardened his heart : he would not let the people go.

By the banks of the river Nile—that river which the Egyptians worshipped, that river in whose waters the murdered babes of their bondsmen had perished—Moses and Aaron met, for the third time, the haughty Pharaoh. And this was the message which God's ambassador bore : *Thus saith the Lord, In this shalt thou know that I am the Lord : behold, I will smite with the rod which is in mine hand upon the waters which are in the river, and they shall be turned into blood.*

The awful sentence was carried into execution before a horror-struck nation. The fair river, the pride of Egypt, became a red and loathsome flood, in which no fish could live, and from which rose a deathlike stench. The waters under which lay the corpses of innocents, reddened into murder's appropriate hue. For seven days this fearful judgment lasted, and then was in mercy removed, though its horrors had wrought no change in the hardened tyrant.

This was the first of a series of terrible plagues which descended on Egypt, and on the proud king who had dared, in his impious presumption, to measure his strength against that of the Omnipotent God. Time will not allow us to dwell on each particular judgment. The most striking of them may be summed up in the glowing words of the Psalmist : *He sent darkness, and*

made it dark ; and they rebelled not against His word. He turned their waters into blood, and slew their fish. Their land brought forth frogs in abundance in the chambers of their kings. He spake, and there came divers sorts of flies and lice in all their coasts. He gave them hail for rain, and flaming fire in their land. He smote their vines also and their fig-trees, and brake the trees of their coasts. He spake, and the locusts came, and caterpillars, and that without number, and did eat up all the herbs in their land, and devoured the fruit of their ground.

Struck down by such repeated strokes, terrified into short submission, six times did Pharaoh show signs of yielding—six times was his pride bowed under the heavy hand of a chastising God. No light anguish must that have been which found vent in such words as these from the lips of the mightiest of living men : *I have sinned this time ; the Lord is righteous, and I and my people are wicked. Entreat the Lord, for it is enough. Now, therefore, forgive, I pray thee, my sin only this once, and entreat the Lord your God that He may take away from me this death only.* Yet whenever the plague was removed, the stubborn rebellious spirit returned to its disobedience : Pharaoh hardened his heart, and would not let God's people go.

And here, my friends, let us pause to consider the difference—wide as that which divides life from death—

between true and false repentance. Had Pharaoh died at once after making his humble, earnest petition for mercy, the world might have deemed—he himself might have deemed—that he had made his peace with God ; and yet we know from the sequel that he had never truly repented. Many on a sick-bed, or under the pressure of heavy affliction, seem, like Pharaoh, to repent. They cry aloud, “ I have sinned—God have mercy upon me ! ” and appear to turn in trembling contrition towards Him whose wrath they dread. I have read of a clergyman who, during the course of a forty years’ ministry, had noted down every case which had come before him of those who seemed on a sick-bed to repent : their number reached *two thousand*. And how many of these, when restored to health, showed by their future reformed lives that their repentance had been from the heart ? Alas, my friends, only *two* ! True repentance is the grief of a child who has offended a loving father ; false repentance is the terror of a slave who crouches beneath the lash. True repentance is followed by the fruits of a holy life ; false repentance by an eager return to the pleasures of sin,—as a pendulum, raised for a moment towards the right, swings back as far in an opposite direction. True repentance creates horror for sin,—its cry is, *Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me* ; false repentance is mere dread of punishment, and dies when that dread is removed.

And it is an awful reflection, that afflictions, if they do not *soften*, tend to *harden*, the heart. No iron is so tough as that which has received many blows from the hammer. When we read that *God hardened Pharaoh's heart*, we must remember that both mercies and judgments, if they move not to true faith and repentance, must, in the very nature of things, leave the sinner worse than he was before. Pharaoh remains to the end of time an example of that awful case described in the Scriptures—*He that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.*

Before we proceed to review the last and most terrible of all the plagues of Egypt—the destruction of the first-born—let us, as I proposed at the beginning of these lectures, compare the mission of Moses with that of his great Antitype, our blessed Redeemer. And here, as regards the wonderful works wrought in Egypt and Palestine, we are less struck by a likeness than by a contrast. Moses, the fearless reprover of guilt, the executor of the wrath of a justly-offended God, stands before us as the minister of righteous vengeance, the representative of *justice*; our Saviour, in His tenderness and pity, the minister of grace to the penitent, is the representative of heavenly *mercy*. Moses changed water into *blood*; Christ changed water into *wine*. At the word of the one the fierce storm arose; at the word of

the other a tempest was stilled. Moses smote the Egyptians with grievous sores; the touch of the Saviour was healing. The son of Amram stretched out his hand towards heaven, and there was darkness over Egypt, even darkness that might be felt; the Son of God came as a *light unto the Gentiles, to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death.*

Yet let us never forget that in the ways of Providence, *Justice* and *Mercy* are never opposed—they are both equally attributes of God. Moses executed judgment according to the will and by the command of that same gracious Saviour who willeth not the death of a sinner. In reviewing the terrible punishments which fell upon Pharaoh and his godless people, we must remember the warning spoken by Christ Himself—*Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.* As we have more light, more privileges, than the Egyptians ever enjoyed, so will our chastisement be more terrible if, like them, we harden our hearts. It was to such as had, like ourselves, received knowledge of the truth, that St. Paul addressed the glowing rebuke: *Despiseth thou the riches of His goodness and forbearance and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? but after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.*

But oh! how shall we, how shall any, escape this

righteous, this awful judgment? How can God's justice and His mercy be reconciled in His dealings with us poor sinners? How can guilt be punished, and yet the guilty be spared? This is the great mystery of our redemption—the mystery which Divine Wisdom alone could solve. *The just shall live by faith*: the whole gospel scheme of salvation rests on this solemn truth. That we may understand something of its meaning, let us proceed to consider the last of the ten judgments upon Egypt—the destruction of the first-born—and behold by what marvellous means God's people were preserved from sharing the fate of His foes. Here we may behold as in a picture the way—the *only way*—by which we can escape eternal destruction. Oh, may the Spirit of God open the eyes of our understanding, that in the Paschal Lamb devoted to death we may see a type of *the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world*; that in the blood which, sprinkled on the door-posts, made the destroying angel pass, we may behold foreshadowed the blood of Jesus Christ, which cleanseth us from all sin!

Moses said, *Thus saith the Lord, About midnight will I go out into the midst of Egypt, and all the first-born in the land of Egypt shall die.* In that land dwelt the children of Israel, even as God's people now dwell in the midst of a guilty and sentenced world. The Israelites could have devised no means of keeping the destroying

angel from their homes. God himself provided a remedy : all that was needed on the part of His redeemed ones was faith and obedience to apply that remedy. Moses commanded the congregation on the tenth day of the month Abib—which corresponds to our March and April—to take a lamb for each household, a lamb without blemish or spot, and slay it on the fourteenth day of the month. They were to eat that lamb in the night ; roast with fire, with bitter herbs and unleavened bread should they eat it : and take of the blood, and strike it on the two side-posts and on the upper door-post of each house wherein the holy feast should be prepared. *It is the Lord's passover*—such was the message from the Most High—for *I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the first-born in the land of Egypt.....I am the Lord : and the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are ; and when I see the blood I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you.*

We are not left in any doubt as to the typical meaning of this passover, this solemn feast and blood of sprinkling. I need but refer you to the inspired words of the Apostle Paul in reference to the death of the Saviour : *Christ, our Passover, is sacrificed for us, therefore let us keep the feast ; not with the old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.* It was

not without the special ordering of God that the time of the yearly celebration of the passover should be chosen for that on which the Son of God shall suffer. "In the same month, on the same day, and at the same hour in which the Israelites were ordered to kill the Lamb,"* the Lamb of God expired on the cross. His blood, sprinkled through faith on the heart, is to the soul what the blood sprinkled on the door-posts was to the body—it saves, *and it alone can save.*

Let us consider the acts of the Israelites on that awful passover night, that we may more clearly comprehend how we, like them, can only *live by faith.*

Not one amongst the many thousands of Israel appears to have doubted or to have neglected the warning. The long-expected, long-desired time of their redemption had come. In faith every preparation that haste permitted had been made for a journey ; and each family gathered together on that night to partake of its paschal lamb, according to the direction of Moses, girded for travel, with shoes on the feet and staff in the hand. With a trembling joy would they eat of that which was a pledge of their great redemption. Death was abroad in that dark, awful night ; but God's people had nothing to fear. They, in obedience and faith, had signed each door with the blood of the lamb.

But let us consider for a moment what would have

* Polwhele.

been the fate of any Israelite who should have had no faith in the word of Moses—who would neither believe in the danger nor take the means appointed to avert it. He might have been the descendant of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob ; he might have been full of knowledge, active in works of usefulness, respected, honoured, beloved ; but neither his descent nor his works could have saved his home from the destroying angel.

Thus is it with us, my friends. Our Christian name, our Christian privileges, nay, our works of charity and love, cannot save us in the great day of wrath. There is but one appointed means of salvation—faith in the atoning blood of the Lord.

And, again, see how faith wrought *obedience*. Had the Israelites said that they believed the word of Moses, yet had neglected or delayed to obey his directions, where had been the use of such lifeless faith ? With them faith and obedience were closely united ; as it is written in the Scriptures—*The people bowed the head and worshipped ; and the children of Israel went away, and did as the Lord had commanded.*

And at midnight there arose an awful cry : the wail of a nation in anguish—the piercing laments of bereaved mothers mourning their first-born suddenly stricken down in their youth and strength. For the angel of death had passed through the land ; and in every house there lay a corpse—every house that bore not on its



DEATH OF THE FIRST-BORN.

door the sign of redemption. And Pharaoh rose up in haste. The crushing blow of bereavement had fallen also on him, and he called for Moses and Aaron at once : he dared not wait for the morning.

Rise up, cried the bereaved father, and get you forth from among my people, both ye and the children of Israel, and go serve the Lord as ye said.

There was hurrying to and fro on that eventful night: not more eager were the Israelites to escape from bondage than their late oppressors were to hurry them forth. The Egyptians brought their jewels and their gold, and whatsoever was needed by the children of Israel, thus making some tardy return to their bondsmen for many long years of service unrequited. The multitude went forth from the land where they had toiled so long and suffered so much, bearing with them the revered dust of the patriarch Joseph. Men trod the dusty way, driving their flocks and herds before them, with their kneading troughs bound on their shoulders; children ran by the side of dark-eyed mothers, who bore their last-born babes in their arms. Oh, what deep joy and thanksgiving must have thrilled through the hearts of those parents, as closer they clasped those babes to their bosoms—rescued, redeemed, heirs of the Land of Promise! Never should their children know the yoke under which their parents had groaned; never should they feel the tyrant's lash, nor eat the bitter bread of bondage. Farewell, and for ever, land of sin and of sorrow, God himself shall guide His redeemed to a fairer and happier home!

That was, indeed, a night much to be remembered; and by the express command of the Lord the yearly feast of the Passover was ordained at this time, to be from thenceforth a perpetual remembrance of the great deliverance of His people from bondage. In this feast


we have a type of the Lord's Supper, the memorial appointed by Christ Himself of the greater deliverance of His people from the bondage of Satan and death. It is in that solemn and sacred feast that the Christian soul feeds by faith on Him whose death was our life, whose blood was the price of our salvation. In that feast we renew our resolution to turn away for ever from the Egypt of sin, to cast from our souls, in the strength of our Lord, the heavy yoke of Satan, and seek an abiding home in heaven, of which we are made the heirs through faith.





CHAPTER XVI.

JUDGMENT.

“ND what did you think of Mr. Eardley and his lecture?” inquired Mrs. Bolder of her husband, as the two sat together at supper in the little back-parlour behind their shop.

“Mr. Eardley is a very well-meaning man, and a very hard-working man—I’ve nothing to say against him,” observed the grocer in the decided tone of one who feels that he has both the capacity to form and the right to pronounce a judgment; “but I don’t think much of his preaching. To my mind he makes dangerous mistakes.”

“What kind of mistakes, my dear?” asked Mrs. Bolder, a quiet little woman, who looked up to her husband as the impersonification of wisdom.

“Well, in the first place, he was not practical enough,” said Tychicus; “he did not say a word against drunkenness, which is the very curse of our age, and the root of

all sin. Did you ever hear what a row there is going on outside?" said the grocer, interrupting himself; "a set of tipsy wretches shouting at the top of their voices."

"But did not Mr. Eardley speak against sin?" asked Cecily Bolder. She had to repeat her question, for the noise without was so great that her husband could hardly hear her.

"Yes, sin in general. He spoke of it as Egyptian bondage, something that we had all been born in, and that we were all to break from. But that's just what I object to," continued the grocer. "Mr. Eardley put us all together, good and bad; every one in danger of eternal destruction, every one to be saved by faith, or not saved at all! Now are we to suppose"—Tychicus raised his voice, and used a good deal of action in speaking, as if arguing a disputed point with his wife, though she never dreamed of contradicting him—"are we to suppose that a man like—like Robert Holdich, who never told a lie in his life, nor defrauded a man of a penny, was ever—could ever have been in the same danger as a fellow like Ford? Why, that unprincipled villain, as you know well enough, tried to be the ruin of Holdich, and almost succeeded in his wicked design; when he dared not attack the steward as a wolf, Ford played the part of the crawling adder. Now will you dare to tell me," continued Tychicus, striking the table

with his fist, "will you dare to tell me that *without faith* the one man could lose his soul, or that if the other *had faith* he could escape the justice of God?"

Tychicus had made the error so common to fallen man—that of confusing *faith*, the root of all true goodness, with the graces which are its fruit. Was Holdich upright and truthful, firm in fidelity, and kindly in deed? It was *because* his heart had been sprinkled with the atoning blood of the Lamb. It was *because* his face, since his youth, had been steadily turned towards the heavenly Canaan. If he had been honest from mere *pride*, wise from *self-interest*, generous from the *desire of men's praise*, and had he trusted in such virtues to shield his soul from the stroke of God's just wrath, he would have perished from unbelief just as surely as an Israelite who should have neglected the only means of salvation.

Tychicus might have gone on in his undisputed argument, had not the eyes and attention of his wife been evidently wandering. The noise outside was increasing, and hardly had her husband finished his sentence, when she started up and exclaimed, "I'm sure—I'm sure that something's the matter. What a smell of burning! and see, smoke is coming in under the door!"

Tychicus turned round in his chair, and, without rising, flung open the door which divided the parlour from the shop. Then, indeed, he started to his feet in

alarm, for there was a red, fearful glare from without, which made the whole place as light as day, and the husband and wife heard plainly enough the cries of "Fire! fire!" the shouts, the yells, the roar of flames, the crackling of timber, which had before reached them as a confused sound of tumult, through their closed door.

"The 'Jolly Gardener' is on fire!" exclaimed Tychicus, rushing through the shop, and mixing with the throng without, who were regarding with mingled excitement and terror that grand and awful sight—a dwelling in flames.

The public-house had been built chiefly of wood, and the conflagration shot up to a fearful height—a red beacon already visible for miles around. Bewildered and alarmed, the inhabitants of Wildwaste, men, women, and children, had rushed out from their hovels to look on; but none of the excited crowd appeared to have any idea of taking measures to subdue the fire, or to prevent its spreading. A confused Babel of voices arose, amongst which Tychicus distinguished short sentences, now shouted by men's hoarse voices, now in women's shriller and more piercing tones.

"Mercy on us! if the wind gets up, we'll have every cottage burnt to ashes afore morning!" "Where's Ford?" "No one knows." "Has any one gone for the engines?" "There's not a one nearer than Axe." "Yes, yes; there's one kept at the castle." "Stone's

cottage will catch next;—don't go nigh, ye brat!" shrieked an excited mother, wildly catching hold of a venturesome child; "we'll have the whole burning house down upon us." "How it flares! how it burns! There must ha' been a lot of spirits in the cellar." "There, there! see the flames aleaping out o' the windows. Lucky for Stone his roof's not thatch." "Hark! what's that?" "Hurrah, hurrah! here comes the engine from the castle!" and every face in the crowd, as if moved by common impulse, was turned in the direction whence sounded the trampling of horses' hoofs and the rumble of wheels.

Mounted on his black steed, and followed at a short distance by Lionel, Sir Thomas, two other gentlemen, and a groom, also on horseback, Arthur Madden had crossed the common at full gallop, and was now at the scene of the conflagration. He did not attempt to ride through the crowd, nor bring his excited, snorting, rearing horse near to the roaring fire; but dismounted, gave the rein to the groom, and with rapid strides made his way towards the building in flames. His movements and those of his companions were at first scarcely noticed by the crowd, whose eager interest was concentrated on the engine which came rattling and plunging at speed over the boggy land towards the nearest pool, at the back of the hamlet, from which a supply of water could be obtained.

"It's Holdich himself as is driving the engine. What a pace he goes at!" "He's the fellow as knows what he's after." "He's got the carriage horses from the castle."

"Hands here for the pumping!" shouted the loud manly voice of Holdich, who had sprung down from the horse which he had been riding bare-backed, and who was now engaged in preparing the hose. The fireman's office was as new to the steward as that of driver had been; but he set to work with all the steady energy of his resolute nature. His utmost efforts, however, must have been of little avail, but for the presence of Arthur Madden, in whom the excitement of the moment seemed to have developed powers of command and a promptitude of action of which he himself had not hitherto been conscious. Arthur, though the youngest of the gentlemen present, intuitively took the lead, the workmen instinctively obeying him. At his word strong brawny arms were bared for toil; some of the peasants hurried off to the pool, where Holdich was straining every muscle in pumping; others formed a line to direct the hose; while Arthur himself, almost suffocated with the intense heat, and blinded by the glare, led the way in pulling down a low out-building which formed the connecting link between the burning house and a row of cottages, of which Stone's, being the nearest, was in most imminent danger. Lionel and two of his companions

had quitted their horses, which had been rearing and plunging furiously, and joined in taking an active part in the scene, though exposed to far less peril than Arthur. Sir Thomas kept at safe distance, looking on with curious eyes while others laboured, and panted, and risked life and limb in the desperate struggle to subdue the fierce element of destruction. It was indeed a sight which, once beheld, could never be forgotten. The crowd increased in size every minute: servants from the castle, people from neighbouring farms, came hurrying to the spot, some impelled by curiosity, some by a nobler motive. Arthur, labouring almost in the fire, with the one definite object before him of breaking down the connection between the blazing building and the cottages beyond it, inciting by his voice and example the exertions of Stone and of one or two other men who, with axe and pick-axe, were tearing down planks and beams, felt like one in a strange wild dream. And dream-like was the image which flashed across his eyes of a little girl in the doorway of Stone's imperilled cottage, bare-headed, bare-footed, in the white garment in which she had been startled from sleep, but with a red cloak drawn tightly around her, her black eyes dilated with terror, her lips apart, as she watched with trembling, breathless eagerness the strenuous efforts of her father to save his home.

"Fly, Lottie, fly!" shouted Arthur; "don't stay a moment in danger!"

Lottie heard his voice, but he could not hear her reply, "I can't—I can't leave mother, and she must stay here, for Gideon's in one of his bad fits."

If the scene was wild and terrible without, almost more fearful was that within the wretched home into which Lottie now hastily vanished. Chained to the dwelling which in a few minutes might be blazing over her head, by the state of a lad who lay writhing on the mud floor in strong convulsions that rendered it impossible for her to remove him, stood Deborah Stone, wringing her hands, and gasping forth a prayer for mercy and help, in her moment of sorest need, to the God who hears the cry wrung from a mother's bursting heart. There was no light in the cottage but the reflection of the glare from without, and the fearful gleams of red through the warped lath and cracking plaster on the wall nearest to the blazing building; but such light was sufficient to show the struggles of the poor sufferer on the floor, the agonized face of the mother, the terrified looks of the frightened little girl.

"Oh yes, mother, pray—pray—God can hear us—God can save us!" exclaimed Lottie, recalling in that awful moment the lessons learned from the meek lips of the steward's wife.

Deborah sank on her knees, raised her clasped hands and her tearless eyes, and prayed as she never had prayed before.

The fire-engine was by this time brought to bear on the burning house. The stream of water fell hissing on the glowing timbers, and a light cloud of white vapour mingled with the denser volumes of smoke that rose in the air. But it was too soon evident that the engine was as a child's plaything used against the fiery monster that was devouring beam and rafter, leaping along the roof, curling around the chimneys, crackling, roaring, raging, as if exulting in its work of destruction.

"Play on the cottage next it!" shouted Arthur; "we cannot save the house. Deluge the cottage with water, bring wet blankets—all we can now attempt is to prevent the fire from spreading."

"Ay, ay; no one can save *that* building!" exclaimed Tychicus, extending his clenched hand towards the burning public-house. "The judgment of God is on it and its owner. Where's Ford? has no one seen him since the fire broke out?"

As Tychicus uttered the sentence there was a sudden movement in the crowd, and a man in a state of wild excitement burst through it, fiercely striking aside to right and left whatever stood in his way. It was Ford, who had been absent that night from his house, and who had been guided back to it now by the lurid glare of the flame that was consuming all that he possessed upon earth.

"My money—my money!" he exclaimed, and dashed into the burning dwelling.

"He's lost! he's lost!" cried a number of voices. "Lost—soul and body!" echoed Tychicus, in a tone which made horror thrill through the veins of his more tender-spirited wife.

Several terrible moments elapsed, and the wretched man returned not.

"He has swooned with the heat—he's smothered by the smoke—something has fallen on him?" burst from various voices in the crowd.

"Lost—soul and body!" repeated Tychicus.

"God forbid!" exclaimed Arthur, who had heard the fearful words, and who realized the horror of a guilty spirit suddenly, and all unprepared, thus plunged into eternity. He snatched a wet cloak from the hands of a man who was carrying it, threw it over his own head, and, darting up a silent prayer to his God, sprang into the flaming house.

"Stop, Arthur—for Heaven's sake!" exclaimed Lionel. His loud cry was neither unheard nor unheeded by Arthur; it served to stimulate, to encourage the young man in his desperate effort. He could feel thankful even at that awful moment of danger that his only brother had spoken to him once more.

Arthur seemed to have plunged into a furnace in which no one could remain for two minutes and live. He must instantly have retreated, and given up the attempt to save Ford as utterly hopeless, had not almost

the first object before him been the senseless body of the miserable man, lying but a few feet within his own doorway. Ford had stumbled over a fallen plank, and, almost suffocated by the heat and smoke, had been unable again to rise. Arthur grasped hold of the fallen man, made no attempt to lift him, but, collecting all his powers for one great final effort, staggered back into the open air, dragging with him the poor wretch whose life he had saved at such fearful risk of perishing with him !

Then burst forth such a shout from the people as rose louder than the roar of the conflagration, as was heard even at Castle Lestrange, reaching the ears of the anxious ladies who, from the highest turret, were gazing at the distant fire. Arthur himself scarcely heard the shout, for his brain was reeling, his strength was failing, and, but for the supporting arm of Tychicus, he could hardly have reached the little shop, into which was borne after him the senseless form of Dan Ford.

A few minutes afterwards the upper story of the public-house fell with a crash, bringing down such a mass of dust and rubbish, that the fire was partially choked beneath the ruin itself had wrought ; and before the flames could again rise to anything like their former height, down came suddenly a tremendous torrent of pelting rain, hissing and steaming on the burning wreck and the fire-cracked ground, and soon driving many of the crowd to seek shelter within their homes. So fast

and so furiously fell the rain, that Sir Thomas, wet to the skin, was glad to set spurs to his horse, and ride back to the castle; nor were Lionel and the other gentlemen long in following his example, when all the excitement of danger was over, and it had become evident that the fire which had destroyed one dwelling was no longer likely to spread through the hamlet. Even the cottage of Stone, though its roof was covered with cinders, rubbish, and fragments of charred wood, was not very materially injured. There a weeping woman was thanking God for almost unhopèd-for deliverance; while her son, slowly returning to consciousness, was staring around him in dreamy wonder.

To return to the shop of Tychicus Bolder. A draught of cold water, eagerly swallowed, and more of the refreshing element bathing face and hands, soon restored Arthur to his usual vigour, though his hair and dress bore marks of the fearful heat to which he had been exposed. Ford took longer to rally: he had received some severe and painful burns; but the anguish of his mind was more intolerable to bear than the bodily pain, and he would hardly submit, in his restless impatience, to have his wounds dressed by Mrs. Bolder.

"Ruined—ruined!" he muttered to himself between his clenched teeth; "why have I lived for this?"

"Why," exclaimed the indignant Bolder, who felt his parlour desecrated by the very presence of such a man

as Dan Ford, "I hope that you live to repent of your misdeeds, and make what amends you can for all the evil which you have done. But for that brave gentleman—"

"Never strike at a man when he's down!" cried Arthur Madden.

Tychicus looked somewhat sullen at the unexpected rebuke. "If you but knew, sir, how he treated Robert Holdich," he began, but his sentence was interrupted by the entrance of the steward himself. Holdich's hair and clothes were dripping from the rain, while his face was blackened with smoke and soot, and haggard from violent exertion; yet Arthur Madden thought that he had seldom looked on a countenance more pleasant in its frank, manly, and kindly expression.

"Thank God for the rain," said the steward; "it has done far more than we could. I think, sir," he continued, addressing himself to Arthur, "that I can take back the horses to the castle; but it may be well, as a precaution, to leave the engine behind, as the ruins are smouldering still." Then, turning towards Ford, who was seated by the window, he walked close up to the ruined man, and said simply, "Come with me to my home, you'll have a bed and a welcome."

Ford started up from his seat: he could not look the steward in the face; he felt crushed and humbled by the generous offer of the man whom he had deeply hated and cruelly wronged.

"*Your* home—no, no," he muttered, shaking his head, "I'm not brought to that. Robert Holdich, I could not go there."

"You must go somewhere," said Tychicus under his breath, "for as sure as my name's Bolder, you shall not stay under my roof."

It is doubtful whether any one heard or was intended to hear the words, but Ford threw a fierce glance on the speaker, as if he guessed their import.

"Abner Stope owes me a long score," said the ruined publican, gloomily; "till I am well enough to go up to London, I'll stay with him;" and without uttering either thanks or farewell, Ford hurried out into the rain, groaning as his eye fell on the smoking ruins of what had once been his home.


"There goes one whom no judgments will change!" exclaimed Tychicus Bolder. "He's had loss of character, loss of place, and now he has loss of all his ill-gotten gains, and a hair's-breadth escape for his life: but Dan Ford will harden his heart like Pharaoh; it's the clay—the base clay in the fire!"

"Don't judge him, neighbour," said Holdich gravely; "he's in God's hands, not ours. I pity him from my heart."



CHAPTER XVII.

COMING TO THE RESCUE.

RTHUR Madden did not reach his home till past midnight. He found that the dinner-guests had departed, but the family at the castle were all awaiting his return,—not one had retired to rest. A hot supper was prepared for the young man, for which fasting and fatigue had made him more than ready.

The events connected with the fire at Wildwaste had shaken for the time even the deeply-rooted prejudices entertained against Arthur. Lionel shook him by the hand, Cora hoped that he had sustained no harm, and Mrs. Madden in her blindest tone declared that he was a hero. Lina clung to her brother, when she met him at the door, with a fond though silent embrace, which expressed, far better than words could have done, all the anxiety which she had suffered on his account, and the joy and the pride which she felt! Lina could

hardly take off her gaze from Arthur while he partook cheerfully of the refreshment which he greatly required, except when she turned aside to dash from her eyes the tears of thankful affection which would well up and dim them. That hour was to Arthur Madden one of the brightest of his existence. It has been said that "rest" is "a sense of duty performed," and he knew that he had on that night bravely and well performed his duty. Arthur retired to repose with a very weary frame, but a very light heart, full of thankfulness to God, and at peace with all mankind.

Trials, however, returned with the morning. With characteristic bad taste, such as might have led him to whitewash carved oak, or "paint the lily," Sir Thomas echoed Mrs. Madden's word "hero," and rung all the changes on it with such fulsome praise and exaggerated eulogium, as disgusted his hearers, and made his admiration lower instead of exalt its object. The demon of jealousy was roused in the breast of Lionel, and he felt less disposed than ever to tolerate the younger brother whose deeds had eclipsed his own. The stream of Cora's malice had speedily flowed back into its accustomed channel.

"Really, Sir Thomas," she ironically exclaimed, "you should write an epic poem on the burning of the 'Jolly Gardener,' a poem as long as the Iliad, with Arthur as the Achilles of course! We should have him depicted

in the frontispiece, rushing into the alehouse, with a squirt in one hand, and a watering-pot in the other, shouting out in most thrilling tones, 'I'll save my publican or perish !' "

The circle laughed, with the exception of Lina, who looked indignant at a jest being made on a subject so serious. Arthur's smile had little of mirth in it; he knew that his sister's malice had pointed her poor attempt at wit.

The *Times* which came down from London on that morning also tended to widen family division, and increase the bitter feeling towards Arthur which his conscientious conduct had raised. "That odious heading, *Verner v. Madden*" was followed in this report of proceedings by the printed extract from the letter which Arthur had forwarded, and comments were made on "the chivalrous generosity of the Madden family" which had placed so remarkable and "telling" a document in the hands of the lawyers. Lionel, when he came to this sentence, in disgust flung the paper across the table, muttering, as he cast on his brother a look of withering contempt, "There's nothing which fools will not sacrifice for a breath of popular applause !"

The spacious apartment in which the Maddens took their sumptuous repasts together, was becoming to Arthur something like the examination chamber of the Inquisition; the time necessarily passed in it was pain-

ful, and the room was always quitted with a sensation of relief. Arthur's sensitive, affectionate nature was wounded to the quick by domestic unkindness; he had often difficulty in keeping his temper, and guarding his lips from angry retort. *Better a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith*, was a verse which often painfully recurred to his mind. Arthur, when surrounded by his family, felt that if his uncle's reply to his letter were long delayed, he could hardly endure the trial of daily intercourse with the foes of his own household, whose ingenuity was employed in torturing the spirit which they had not been able to subdue. But *let patience have its perfect work*; this was what Arthur strove to take as his watchword, though feeling that to a young and ardent mind patience is—of all the graces—the most difficult to be acquired.

"Whither bound, Arthur dearest?" asked Lina, as with straw hat on her head, and light scarf on her shoulders, she met her brother in the hall, about an hour after breakfast.

"I am going to walk over to Wildwaste," said Arthur.

"Oh, I'm so glad,—that was just where I wanted to go, to see the place where the fire occurred, the scene of your gallant exploit."

"Much rain has fallen, you will find the common hardly passable," observed Arthur.

"What care I for miry road, or quaking morass, when

I have the escort of my hero-brother!" exclaimed Lina. "But," she continued, with sudden gravity, looking up into his face, "it seems as if you did not wish to have me as your companion."

"Well, wee thing, to own the truth——"

"Oh, I never choose to intrude my company where it is unwelcome!" exclaimed Lina, withdrawing the hand which she had placed on the arm of her brother.

"Nay, now, Lina, you must not be angry with me—like the rest of the world," said Arthur; and he took the little hand, and drew it within his arm; then continued, as they descended together the steps which led down from the portico, "you shall come with me, and you shall know all that I think of doing,—there shall be no secrets between you and me. I am visiting Wild-waste as a recruiting sergeant, Lina; I want to beat up a few scholars there, to begin a kind of little day-school and Sunday-school in the grocer's shed."

"And who's to be the teacher?" asked Lina.

The young man flushed a little, and looked on the ground as he answered, "I—in default of a better."

"You! oh no, no, that never will do," cried Lina.

"I was afraid that you would think so," said Arthur, whose affection for his younger sister made him feel her want of sympathy more discouraging than opposition from any one else. "But you see, Lina, I had a long conversation last evening after the lecture, with Mr.

Eardley, when I told him something of my visit to Wildwaste, and the thoughts in regard to that wretched place which I could not drive out of my mind. I told him all that I had fancied might justify me in doing nothing—my uncertain stay here, the necessity for hard study, the evil of commencing a work with which I should not be able to go on. Mr. Eardley listened kindly and patiently, but did not give my arguments for self-indulgence the weight which I had hoped that he would."

"Let him work himself, it is his office," cried Lina.

"No, Mr. Eardley cannot work at Wildwaste," said Arthur; "it does not belong to his parish, and lies very far from his church. But Mr. Eardley believes that Mr. Parton might be induced to carry on a class if one were only set on foot, though he is too diffident and shy to commence anything of the sort himself, nor would undertake the first breaking into something like order the young roughs of the wretched hamlet. Mr. Eardley grasped at the idea of my breaking the ice, making some kind of a beginning, holding a daily class for two hours: and if I acquired an influence over my pupils, I might certainly use it to draw them to the bi-weekly cottage meetings. Thus, dear one, even when I am away—as I hope soon to be—hard at work with a tutor in London, I may hope that my short stay here has not been quite without use."

"So you are expected to break in all the young cubs,

and just when they begin to look a somewhat more respectable pack, you are to hand over the whip to some one else, who will have all the credit of their improvement! You've no notion what a task is before you!"

"I have a pretty good notion," replied Arthur, with a very significant smile: "I have held back from it as long as I could, but," he added gravely, "the events of last night have been to me as a solemn confirmation of my own impression that it is my duty to labour at Wild-waste, and that I cannot refuse to attempt at least to do some little good there, without opposing what I believe to be the will of my Lord."

"Better hire a schoolmaster," suggested Lina, "than submit to such drudgery yourself."

"How am I to hire any one," said Arthur, "when for the very bread that I eat,—for the very means of acquiring the knowledge which may one day make me independent, I must be indebted to others?"

"Oh, that horrid law-suit!" exclaimed Lina. "But you have just touched on a point which proves that you cannot undertake this dreadful teaching. You must study yourself—study hard."

"Yes, I know it," replied Arthur Madden. "I have been arranging my plans. I shall try to get over my lazy habit of late rising, and go to my books early. I find that I can thus give seven clear hours daily to study, and yet reserve time for my class."

"But your fishing, your shooting, your croquet, your riding—"

"I fear that I shall not have time for them."

"Oh, Arthur, Arthur! what a sacrifice!" exclaimed Lina, to whom the idea of living without such recreations was like that of being buried alive. She could not speak another word for several minutes, but clambered over the stile which divided the castle grounds from the common, without accepting the help of her brother's extended hand, and began making her way across the swampy waste as fast as the perpetual danger of leaving her goloshes in the mire would let her.

"Look there!" she exclaimed at last, stopping and pointing to the dreary flat expanse before them; "that's an emblem of what your life is going to be!"

"Look there," repeated Arthur, glancing upward towards an opening in the lowering clouds through which poured a stream of the most brilliant sunshine; "and remember that there is something that can gild and brighten even such a landscape as this."

"I cannot endure to see you throwing yourself away!" exclaimed Lina, resuming her walk. "When you dashed last night into the flames, it was a great and glorious deed (whatever Cora in her malice may say), and when I heard of it, oh, how proud I was to think that you were my brother! But this—this drudgery,

this slavery,"—the young girl seemed half choked with her feelings, and did not finish the sentence.

"And yet, Lina, the two actions are not dissimilar, though this work," Arthur said with a smile, "goes more against the grain than the other. I felt a kind of—of almost pleasurable excitement last night in working with the rest, and when I sprang into that house it was rather from instinct than anything else. I had really no time to weigh consequences, and scarcely to feel any fear. I *could not* have remained still, knowing that poor wretch to be in the midst of the flames. And yet how long one can remain unmoved, almost indifferent, when souls—not bodies—are in danger! How one can follow business, amusement, folly, easy and careless, while drunkenness, swearing, profanity, perhaps murder itself, are going on almost under one's eyes, without uttering a warning or making an effort to save one fellow-creature from destruction! Lina, I remember long, long ago our mother reading to me from the Bible the song of Deborah, and pausing at the denunciation against the city which had remained inactive during the great struggle which freed the oppressed people of Israel. *Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the Lord, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.* I see before my mind's eye now our dear mother's thoughtful look as she said, 'I fear that curse

will rest on many who call themselves Christians.' I did not understand her words then, and they surprised me; but they came back with force upon my memory this morning when I thought of Wildwaste, and the intense dislike which I have felt to helping in any work there."

Lina made no reply; perhaps from her attention being engrossed by the difficulty of picking her steps. Before the brother and sister entered the hamlet, which stood in the centre of the common, some of the children within had caught sight of Arthur's tall figure, and a little crowd soon assembled to greet the hero of the last night's exploit.

"There he is—that's he—what fought the lion, and knocked down Abner Stone, and worked so hard to put out the fire, and pulled Dan Ford out of the burning house;" and as young Madden advanced towards the groups, they greeted him with a shout which was loud and hearty, if not particularly melodious. This reception given to her favourite brother put Lina into more cheerful spirits, and she listened with amusement to the short colloquy which took place between Arthur and his ragged admirers.

"Thank you, boys, that's enough; I want you to hear *me* now." The noisy welcome subsided down into silence. "Didn't I tell you that an English boy should be brave, and always ready to help the weak?"

"Ay, sir—yes, sir, as you helped the chap in the fire."

"There's another thing that an English boy should do—he should keep his promise when he makes one; now did not you—and you—give me your word that I should see you last evening at the cottage meeting?"

The boys questioned began to rub their heads in evident perplexity, not having any excuse at hand.

"Well, I'll say no more of that this time, but I'm coming to make arrangements for holding a school-class for two hours here every morning, and I hope to begin to-morrow at ten. Now, are there any of you here who will come and do your best to learn what may help you hereafter to be clever, useful, and honest men? Mind," Arthur continued, raising his hand to check the eager reply that he saw every boy was about to make, "let no one here make a promise that he is not resolved to keep."

The boys, thus checked, expressed their willingness to come, in a way a little less noisy than they might otherwise have done. One of them said, grinning merrily, that it would be "a good lark to be taught by a gem-man;" and another saucy little urchin, whose face looked as if it had never been washed in all his life, glancing at Lina, said, archly, "and Miss will come to larn the little gals too."

"They'll hardly catch me doing that," laughed Lina,


as she pursued her way with her brother towards the dwelling of Tychicus Bolder. The smile passed, however, from her lips, as the next few steps which she took brought her in sight of the yet warm and smoking heap of smouldering ruins, which marked the spot where had stood the public-house, once the scene of drunken revel and riot. Instead of accompanying Arthur into the "low shop" which he now entered, Lina stood without gazing on the mass of blackened wreck, from which some dirty, untidy-looking women were pulling out fragments of half-consumed wood to help in keeping up their own little fires. Looking on the scene of her brother's brave efforts, Lina could better realize the terrors of the preceding night. Fancy rekindled the blazing pile, and Lina closed her eyes with a sensation of horror as she imagined what her feelings would have been could she have seen Arthur, as Lionel had seen him, rushing into what had appeared to be the very jaws of destruction. God had preserved him in the hour of danger—God had thrown a shield round his head—and was it not well that Arthur should now seek to devote his ransomed life to the service of God?





CHAPTER XVIII.

THE COTTAGE HOME.

HAT is my wee thing dreaming about?" said Arthur, as, after quitting the shop of Tychicus, he gently laid his hand on his sister's shoulder.

"Oh, Arthur"—she pointed tremblingly to the smoking ruins—"to think what might have been—"

Lina left the sentence incomplete, but her brimming eyes said the rest.

"We will visit Mrs. Stone's cottage now," said Arthur. "I must show you my little friend Lottie."

As they approached the door, a tall, good-looking man came out, with his forehead bandaged, and his left arm in a sling. Lina had never seen him before, but his pale, anxious countenance awoke her compassion.

"That's Ford!" whispered Arthur to Lina, who looked with increased interest on the man who had been saved by her brother.

Ford's manner, also, as he first respectfully bowed to the young lady, and then in fervent language expressed his deep gratitude to his preserver, further enlisted the sympathies of Lina in his favour.

"I take shame to myself for not having thanked you, sir, last night, as I do now with all my heart and soul," said the publican. "But when a man has just seen his house blazing before his eyes—when he has lost in one hour all the hard earnings of his life—he hardly knows what he is doing, sir; his head gets confused and dizzy." Ford raised his hand to his brow as he spoke.

"I am glad to see that you are not more seriously hurt," said Arthur. And he was about to pass on; but Ford evidently wished to say more.

"Ay, sir, it's a good thing, it is, seeing that I've nothing now but my own labour to look to for keeping me out of the workhouse. It's hard for a man like me to begin life again, without so much as a shilling to rub against another."

Lina's look of compassion encouraged Ford to proceed.

"I thought, sir, that a brave, noble-hearted gentleman, such as you are, would maybe give a lift to a poor fellow whose life you had saved. If I might be bold to say it, if there was a paper now sent round to the gentry about here, with such a name as yours at the head, there might be such a subscription got up as would set me on my legs again, and give me a new start in life."

Lina's hand was searching in her pocket for her purse. The spirit of patronage was rising in her, and she wondered that Arthur did not warmly respond to the touching appeal of the ruined man. Young Madden paused in thought for a moment before he replied,—

“I have not myself the means of assisting you ; and if such a paper were sent round, it should be by the clergyman, or some one who knows you well, and not by those who are almost strangers in the place. You had better apply to Mr. Bull or to Mr. Eardley.”

Baffled and disappointed—for the very name of Eardley was as wormwood to the soul of Dan Ford—the publican slunk gloomily away. As soon as he was beyond the hearing of those whom he did not choose to offend, he ground his teeth, and muttered,—

“The hypocrite ! the liar !—he not have the means to help me, and ride a blood-horse as he does ! But oh, the mean, beggarly miser, he's no more a gentleman than I am !”

“Arthur, dearest, it seemed hardly like you to let that poor Ford go without any assistance or encouragement,” said Lina. “Surely it is at least as much a Christian duty to help the homeless as to teach a set of ragged, unmannerly urchins ?”

“There are some cases,” answered Arthur, “where one may do harm in trying to do good. I suspect that this is one of those cases.”

"I like to obey the impulse of my heart," exclaimed Lina, as she followed her brother, picking her steps over the rubbish and dust-heaps which obstructed her way to the low door of the dwelling of Stone.

The place was still hot from the fire which was yet smouldering near, which rendered the sickening odour from the manufactory more oppressive to Arthur and Lina. The cottage, also, was in a state of extreme untidiness and confusion ; the side wall, as has been mentioned, having suffered, though to no very material extent, from the effects of the conflagration. Mrs. Stone—a thin, hollow-eyed woman, with bruise marks on her face, and dark hair escaping from a not very tidy cap—was engaged in washing the scorched and blackened shirt which her husband had worn during his efforts to prevent the fire from spreading. In the corner sat a little girl, whom Lina instantly recognized as the Red Ridinghood described by her brother, though not wearing the scarlet cloak. Lottie rose, her black eyes sparkling with pleasure at sight of Arthur ; and turning to a dull, heavy boy who was breaking up a bit of lath into fragments, she cried, in a very audible whisper,—

"That's he ! that's he ! I thought he'd come to see mother agen."

"Oh, sir," exclaimed Deborah Stone, clasping her red wet hands, "what a night we had !"

"A night to be much remembered," said Arthur.

And the expression which he had casually used recalling to his mind words employed on a more solemn occasion, he added—"It was a night of deliverance to us both, for which we should be thankful indeed to a merciful God."

The poor woman looked at Arthur with a wistful expression, and then observed, with a sigh,—

"I minded these things when I was a girl ; but since I married, what with the care and the worrit, and Abner not thinking that way, and the church being so far, and no one a-visiting here, I've nigh forgotten all that I larned. But last night, with all the flame and the flare, and the roaring and crackling and shrieking, and yon poor lad down in the fit, and the heat like the heat of a furnace—oh, it made me think of the judgment-day. I wished then—I wished—"

Deborah stopped, and shook her head sadly ; then, as if intuitively, went on with her washing.

"I suppose, Mrs. Stone," observed Arthur, "that there is none of us who has not something to be sorry for in the past ; and such events as those of last night may be sent to make us think of such things. You have been unfortunate in being deprived, as you say, of many religious advantages such as others possess ; but surely there is one within your reach—I mean, attendance at the meetings held by Mr. Eardley in the cottage of the steward."

"I've promised Mr. Holdich to go to the next," said Deborah, wiping her hands on her apron. "I couldn't ha' denied him anything; for had not he—and you, sir—worked as you did in the fire, the roof would ha' been burned over our heads last night."

"When did you see Robert Holdich?"

"Was he not over here at daybreak, afore my husband went to his work, with something which his good wife sent for my boy? And didn't he have a word with Ford? and give him a golden sovereign, he did, to take him up to Lunnon to look out some way of gettin' his living. I hope he'll go soon," said the woman, lowering her voice, and looking towards the door—"and that he'll never come back, for he's nigh been the ruin of my husband."

Arthur and Lina exchanged significant glances.

"You see, sir," continued Mrs. Stone, "the 'Black Bear,' it's half a mile off, and don't lie just as it were in the way. Abner kept tolerable steady, except maybe on Sundays, till the 'Jolly Gardener' was set up next door; and it warn't in human nature not to turn into it then."

"The fire of last night was not an unmixed evil," thought Arthur.

While young Madden went on conversing with Deborah as to the practicability of her taking the two children with her to the cottage service, and even per-

haps inducing her husband to attend it, now that the perilous attractions of a "public" next door would tempt him no longer ; Lina tried to make friends with Lottie, and, in doing so, half forgot the disgust with which the heat, the closeness, and the untidy state of the cottage had inspired her. Lina wished to draw out from the child a description of the fire, and especially of the exertions made by her favourite brother.

"You saw Mr. Arthur—that tall gentleman there—doing great things last night," she said, suggestively, to the little girl.

"He pulled down a lot of planks, he and father. Father did most, for he had the hatchet. They both worked as hard as they could."

"And they put out the fire," observed Lina.

"No," said the little girl, quickly, "they didn't put out the fire. 'Oldit brought the big snake, with the little rain, that hissed on the fire ; but that did not put it out. Then God sent the great rain from the sky, and the house fell—oh, with such a terrible crash !" Lottie pressed her little hands on both sides of her head. "And then the dreadful blazing stopped ; and then we was not afeerd any more."

Lina was amused by the naïve and animated manner of Lottie, and began to think that there might be nothing very disagreeable, after all, in teaching one bright, black-eyed little child, even though she was no



LINA AND LOTTIE.

descendant of Abraham, nor dwelt under palm-trees, nor wore the picturesque, flowing garments of the East.

"Would you not like to come to me at the castle, Lottie?" said Lina, in a coaxing tone. There was a very doubtful expression in Lottie's black eyes at the question. "I would teach you to read out of one of my pretty books. Wouldn't you like to be taught by a lady?"

"No," said the little girl, bluntly; "I don't want to be larned by no one but Mrs. 'Oldit."

Lina's vanity was not much flattered by the preference given to the steward's wife.

"I have been rather unlucky in my attempts at philanthropy," she laughingly observed to Arthur, as the two, after taking leave of the Stones, set out on their homeward way. "The first person whom I wish to assist turns out to be quite unworthy of assistance; and the first pupil whom I offer to teach will have nothing to do with my teaching. It is clear that I am not made for this kind of work, and had better leave it to those who better understand it."

So lightly did Lina dismiss for the time from her mind all idea of taking an active part in the Christian mission. She might not have been unwilling to do some desultory act of kindness now and then to those who excited her feelings of natural pity or took her fancy: she was ready *to play at charity*, if she might stop doing so at any moment when she found the occupation irksome or incompatible with some worldly amusement. Lina's religion was all emotion and feeling; something like a holiday garment, worn only on particular occasions—it was not suited to stand the "wear and tear" of daily work. It served to hide from her own eyes the selfishness and vanity that lurked beneath; it made Lina seem to herself more spiritual than most of those around her; and perhaps the sharpest sting of annoyance which Arthur's conduct inflicted on his sister

was that which touched her self-love, rousing a latent suspicion that more decision, more devotedness, were required of a Christian than any that she had hitherto shown. Lina had been quite satisfied with being more religious than Lionel and Cora, more unworldly than Mrs. Madden ; and until lately Arthur's piety had had so little expression in act or word, that it had awakened no uneasiness in the conscience of his sister by contrast with her own. We should suspect that there is something wrong in the state of our hearts when the secret wish arises that those whom we love were a *little less* devoted and earnest ; when, instead of being impelled by their example to press more cheerfully onward in a heavenward path, we would fain have them slacken their speed to suit our more languid and careless walk.





CHAPTER XIX.



DO not propose describing Arthur Madden's first essay in the—to him—new and difficult art of teaching a set of wild, ignorant boys. He had received many practical hints from Mr. Eardley, without which he would have found the task yet more arduous. He grappled to the difficulty with spirit, and soon found that the "pack of cubs," in all their variety of character, would supply him with objects of strong interest, and relieve his mind from dwelling upon more painful themes. The most discouraging feeling to the young teacher was that he was only breaking up fallow ground for another to sow in—that he was only commencing a work that another must complete. But Arthur was beginning to grasp the truth that the Christian mission is *one great work*, carried on from age to age, and employing many generations of workers, yet, like the building of the Ark, or of the Temple, forming a sublime and glorious whole. Blessed they who in faith engage in the work ; though

but as hewers of wood or drawers of water, they are fellow-labourers with apostles and martyrs ; their office, however the world may despise it, is the highest that mortal can hold. While earth's conquerors throw up their sand-hills, which the billows of time must sooner or later sweep away, God's workers build for eternity, and under the eye of their King.

It was encouraging to Arthur on the Friday evening not to miss one of his rough young pupils at the cottage meeting. Their behaviour also was more decorous than might have been expected, considering that probably none of them had ever attended a religious service before. Their teacher's presence served to quiet and overawe the village boys. Arthur was also pleased to see Lottie's scarlet cloak in the doorway, as Deborah came with her two children. Gideon was a large, heavy, silent boy. Arthur had rather regretted at first that this dull unpromising pupil should have joined his class. He soon found, however, that none of his little band was more quiet and attentive than Gideon, more anxious to understand, or more ready to obey. As Arthur saw him seated on the floor (for the cottage did not afford a sufficient number of chairs and benches for its increased congregation), his gray eyes watching every movement of Mr. Eardley's lips, Arthur felt a peculiar interest in that afflicted boy, who had suffered more sorely than his companions from the evils that had surrounded him from

his birth, and who seemed to be more ready than any of them to receive and welcome the good tidings of freedom.

Abner Stone was not present. Unhappily for him, Ford was still lingering on the scene of his former prosperity, and the two men had gone off to drink at the "Black Bear" before Deborah, with a heavy heart, had quitted her home to attend the short service in the cottage of Holdich.

LECTURE V.—MOSES BY THE RED SEA.

When last we met here, dear friends, we reviewed the grand subject of the whole nation of Israel being freed at once from bondage, and setting out, with their flocks and herds, their old men and their feeble little ones, on their pilgrimage to the land promised ages before to their fathers.

But who was to guide this mighty multitude on their way? how were they to find a path through wide-spreading deserts, where no land-mark might meet their eyes? how would they know in trackless wastes where wells were to be found? how were *six hundred thousand people*, with their little ones, to find food or water sufficient to prevent their perishing from want long before they could reach the land of Canaan?

Such thoughts as these must have pressed on the mind of Moses their leader; and but for his faith in the

over-ruling providence of God, they must have become an overwhelming burden too heavy for him to bear. But God granted at once to His people a heavenly guide, that would both serve to direct them, and also be a symbol to them of His presence with them during their dangerous journey. With what thankful joy must Moses have beheld moving before the host of Israel a mysterious pillar—cloud by day, and fire by night—marking the path of safety, the path of duty, for all the multitudes of the Lord's redeemed.

And so, in our journey through the wilderness of life, God has granted to us, in the Holy Bible, such a heavenly guide. *Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path*, says the Psalmist. In times of perplexity and temptation, when we know not what course to pursue, let us turn to our Bible, and find in it a safe guide through darkness and trouble. It is God's own gift to His people. For thousands of years the Scriptures have directed pilgrims from the Egypt of sin and sorrow to the heavenly Canaan of rest. Let us obey them, follow them, prize them; for if we wilfully turn from the course which God's holy Word points out, and continue to wander in paths of our own choice, no doubt we shall perish by the way.

But in following the guiding pillar the faith and obedience of the Israelites were at once severely tried. The natural, it might have seemed the *only*, way by

which a multitude travelling on foot could journey from Egypt to Canaan would be by traversing what we call the Isthmus of Suez, a neck of land to the north of the Red Sea. This was the direct way to Canaan, but it was not the way appointed by God. We can imagine the doubts in the minds of some of the Israelites, and the surprise in all, when the guiding pillar moved onwards towards the south—nay, when it led the host to a place where all further progress appeared to be stopped by the Red Sea.

“Is it possible that God can command us to take such a course as this? It is one that must bring us to certain ruin.” Such, doubtless, were the thoughts which arose in many a heart as the multitude beheld the broad expanse of waters stretching before them. The people could not understand *why* God should bring them hither, nor *how* He could open for them a way of escape. One thing only was clear to all—it was the Lord’s will that they should encamp on the shores of the sea which they had no apparent means of crossing. They must submit and believe, they must obey and trust.

But what was the terror which spread through the multitude when they found that the enemy was in pursuit! Pharaoh, the tyrant of Egypt, had soon recovered from the panic into which the death of his first-born had thrown him. He had soon regretted the

hasty consent to the departure of his bondsmen which had been wrung from him by fear. He determined to pursue with his chariots and horses the defenceless hosts that were slowly wending their way from the land of Egypt. And thus again we see in Pharaoh a picture of the persevering malice of our great foe—the Devil. He will not willingly suffer one poor slave to escape. Even when we have tried to turn from our sins, and follow the guidance of God's Word, he pursues us with manifold temptations. Like the Israelites, shut in between the mountains and the sea, with the chariots and horsemen of Pharaoh coming thundering down upon them, we may sometimes be so overwhelmed by cruel temptations pressing upon us, that we cry out, almost in despair, *Oh, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death!* But if our faith fail not, if we turn not back from following God's Word, the conqueror's song shall soon be ours, *Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

The position of Moses at this time was indeed one of overwhelming trial and difficulty. In following the pillar, he had brought the multitudes of Israel into a valley where, hemmed in between mountains and sea, with heaving waters before them, and a merciless foe behind, they were as a flock penned up for the slaughter. Fierce looks of despair were turned upon

Moses ; the cry of anguish and reproach from those who deemed that he had lured them to their ruin rang in the leader's ears. *Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? Wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt? Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? For better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness.*

Sublime was the faith which inspired the reply of the noble leader, who, at the call of God, had left all that had sweetened life, to devote that life to serving an ungrateful people. *Fear ye not, said Moses; stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which He will show to you to-day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. The Lord shall fight for you, ye shall hold your peace.*

But though the words of Moses were so full of calm confidence and courage, we judge by those of the Lord which immediately follow in the sacred narrative, that the soul of the hero was at that time wrestling in agonised prayer for success in this hour of sore need. *Wherefore cried thou unto Me?* said the Lord. And then came the wondrous command, *Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward: but lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thine hand over the sea, and*

divide it: and the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea.

Then the mysterious pillar moved from its place in the front, and hung suspended between the Israelites and their pursuers, to give light through the night to God's people, while it was as clouds and darkness to their foes. And Moses lifted up his hand, and stretched it over the sea. Oh, stupendous miracle of divine power! The strong east wind blew—the minister of Him who holdeth the deep in the hollow of His hand. The mighty waters divided, and stood up on the right hand and on the left, like towering walls of crystal, leaving a dry path for the redeemed of the Lord to pass over. On what a scene that night did the light from the fire-pillar shine! *The waters saw Thee, O God, the waters saw Thee; they were afraid: the depths also were troubled. Thy way is in the sea, and Thy paths in the great waters, and Thy footsteps are not known. Thou leddest Thy people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron.*

The part of the Red Sea where it is believed * that

* The precise place of this passage has been much contested. Some place it near Suez; others, with more probability, about ten hours' journey lower down, at Clysma, or the valley of Bedea. The modern names of places in the vicinity tend to confirm the latter supposition. The chain of mountains which line the western coast of the Red Sea is called "Attaca"—*deliverance*. On the eastern coast opposite is a headland called "Ras Musa"—or, *the Cape of Moses*. Somewhat lower, "Haman Faraun"—*Pharaoh's Springs*; and the general name of the gulf is "Bahr al Kolsum"—*the Bay of Submersion*.—DR. HALEX.

Dean Stanley thinks that the passage was more to the north, where the channel is not so wide.

I cannot refrain from giving the following quotation from the writings of the celebrated traveller Bruce, as quoted by Dr. Kitto:—

"Diodorus Siculus, lib. iii, p. 122, says, the Troglodytes, the indigenous inhabitants

the multitudes of Israel crossed is about ten or twelve miles broad, and the middle of the channel about eighty feet deep. Many hours of the night must have been occupied by the slow passage of a moving nation, carrying with them all their earthly possessions, and encumbered by flocks and herds. Safely the little feet of children trod the coral-strewn depths * where never before a living foot had left its impress. Strangely rose the murmur of a vast host from the abyss where never human voice had sounded before. Guided, perhaps, by that murmur, mingled with the bleating of sheep and the lowing of oxen, Pharaoh and his fierce warriors followed in the track of their intended victims, and, like them, entered the dry channel of the sea. It is probable that the Egyptians, confused by the darkness, and never for a moment supposing it possible that a way could be opened through the waters, were not in the least aware that they were traversing the bed of those waves that they had seen but a few hours before sparkling in the rays of the sun. Their swift horses and rapidly-rolling wheels must soon have overtaken the slowly-moving

of that very spot, had a tradition from father to son, from their very earliest ages, that once this division of the sea did happen there; and that after leaving its bottom some time dry, the sea again came back, and covered it with great fury. The words of this author are of the most remarkable kind. We cannot think that this heathen is writing in favour of revelation; he knew not Moses, . . . but records the miracle of the division of the sea in words nearly as strong as those of Moses, from the mouths of unbiassed, undesigning pagans."

* Bruce, the traveller, writes of "large trees or plants of white coral spread everywhere over the bottom of the Red Sea. . . . I saw one of these which, from a root nearly central, threw out ramifications of an almost circular form, measuring twenty-six feet every way."

host, had not the Lord Himself again interposed for the deliverance of His people. In the morning watch, just before the dawn of the day, the Lord looked unto the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of cloud, and troubled the host of the Egyptians, and took off their chariot wheels, so that they drove them heavily.

When the light of morning broke, what awful terror must have filled the souls of the foes of Israel, when it revealed to them all the horrors of their marvellous position, low in the bed of the sea, whose piled up waters on either hand remained but suspended till He who upheld them by His omnipotence, should withdraw His sustaining hand, and bid them again plunge down with foaming force into their natural channel! Safely on the opposite shore were landing the multitudes of Israel; the enemy might behold, but never could reach them, nor harm one hair of the head of the feeblest of all that host.

Fear seized the Egyptians. "*Let us flee from the face of Israel, for the Lord fighteth for them,*" was the cry which rang through their terrified bands!

Too late, too late! Warnings had been neglected—trials had been sent in vain—the hour of vengeance had come! At the command of the Lord, Moses, the awful minister of justice, again stretched forth his rod over the sea. Simple might the action appear, but how tremendous the effect! Never had such a scene been wit-



DESTRUCTION OF PHARAOH AND HIS HOST.

nessed since that awful time when all the fountains of the great deep were broken up, when the windows of heaven were opened, and the deluge of destruction swept over a guilty world! Down on the warriors of Egypt, down upon chariots and horsemen, fell the accumulated heaps of crushing waters, foaming, roaring, sweeping away the pride and pomp of the mighty, as straws are swept whirling down the rushing cataract.* Imagination

* The reader may form some faint idea of what the effect of the sea suddenly plunging back into a channel ten or twelve miles broad must have been by comparing it with that of the stupendous Falls of Niagara, one of the wonders of the world. This cataract, whose name signifies "the thunder of the waters," is divided by an island into two distinct falls; their united breadth is about 2700 feet, or little more than *half* a mile. Mr. Picken has calculated that *more than a hundred and thirteen millions* of gallons of water are precipitated down these falls in *one minute*!

cannot realize the terrific grandeur of such a scene, nor can it be worthily described but in the glorious song which burst from the lips of Moses and the children of Israel.

I will sing unto the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea. The Lord is my strength and song, and He is become my salvation: He is my God, and I will prepare Him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt Him.

The Lord is a Man of War: the Lord is His name. Pharaoh's chariots and his host hath He cast into the sea: his chosen captains also are drowned in the Red Sea. The depths have covered them: they sank into the bottom as a stone.

Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power: Thy right hand, O Lord, hath dashed in pieces the enemy. And in the greatness of thine excellency Thou hast overthrown them that rose up against Thee: Thou sentest forth Thy wrath, which consumed them as stubble. And with the blast of Thy nostrils the waters were gathered together, the floods stood upright as an heap, and the depths were congealed in the heart of the sea.

The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; my lust shall be satisfied upon them; I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them.

Thou didst blow with Thy wind, the sea covered them; they sank as lead in the mighty waters.

Who is like unto Thee, O Lord, among the gods? who is like Thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders? Thou stretchedst out Thine right hand, the earth swallowed them. Thou in Thy mercy hast led forth the people which Thou hast redeemed: Thou hast guided them in Thy strength unto Thy holy habitation. . . . The Lord shall reign for ever and ever.

And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances. And Miriam answered them,—

Sing ye to the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea.

In meditating on this wonderful miracle of Israel's passing through the sea, there is a lesson to be drawn from the subject which I must not omit to place before you. As the constantly recurring feast of the Passover was a type of the feast of the Lord's Supper, in which we thankfully remember the death of the Lamb of God by whose blood we are saved, so the passing of Israel through the Red Sea, once for all, was a type of the other sacrament, that of *baptism*, by which Christians commence their pilgrimage towards a heavenly home. Of this we are assured from the inspired words of St.

Paul : *Brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and were all BAPTIZED unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.* As Moses himself went through this typical baptism, so his Antitype, the blessed Saviour, was baptized as well as His people. *Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness,* said the Son of God to the Baptist. And dare we neglect or undervalue that ordinance which the Redeemer enforced by His command, and hallowed by His example? Dare we neglect or undervalue that ordinance of which we have an image in one of the most glorious miracles ever wrought by the power of God?

The deliverance of Israel from their foes is also a type of the final and most glorious deliverance of God's people, the spiritual Israel, from the power of Satan and sin. The song of triumph which sounded by the Egyptians' waters is as the first note of that which shall burst from the redeemed of the Lord who have *gotten the victory*, when they stand in glory by the *sea of glass mingled with fire* (Rev. xv.). *They sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints. Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy name? for Thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before Thee; for Thy judgments are made manifest.*


Oh, my brethren, that we may join in that triumphant song, let us make sure that we are here indeed counted amongst the Lord's redeemed. May we, through grace, be found of the flock that are saved, not of the enemy that perish; mere baptism cannot suffice us; the Egyptians as well as the Israelites went down into the bed of the sea! May we learn from the history before us that the weakest babe is safe in Christ, while the proudest and mightiest monarchs must perish without Him!





CHAPTER XX.

COTTAGE AND CASTLE.

HE full moon was hanging her silver lamp in the sky, as Deborah Stone and her children wended their way back towards the dreary moor of Wildwaste. Lottie's black eyes were raised towards the bright orb, and as she drew her scarlet cloak tightly around her, for the night was chilly, she wondered whether the pillar of fire which guided the Israelites through the sea were as bright as the moon, and threw shadows as long and as dark. Deborah went on in silence, breathing hard as she walked at a pace to keep up with which Lottie was obliged, every now and then, to quicken her steps to a run. When Deborah reached the common she slackened her speed, as the ground was boggy, and small pools here and there shone like silver mirrors in the moonlight.

"Well, mistress, I hope that you took the parson's

preaching to yourself," said a harsh voice behind her, as Tychicus Bolder came up with the group.

"I don't see what the preaching had to do with me," replied Deborah Stone, without turning her head.

"More's the shame for you then," cried her stern reprover. "Did you not mind what was said about baptism, and it's being like the people of Israel passing through the Red Sea? Here have you, calling yourself a Christian woman, been bringing up your poor children like heathen, never taking them to be baptized, nor so much as showing them the inside of a place of worship. You've let them just run wild, so that if other people who are neither their kith nor kin didn't look after them a bit, they might live and die without so much as knowing that there is a God in heaven! You'll have to answer for it, Deborah Stone; as a mother in Israel would have had to answer if she'd left her wretched children behind her in Egypt, while the rest went safely through the sea."

Deborah made no reply, but a darker shadow gathered on her care-worn face. Lottie looked up wonderingly at the hard stern features of Bolder, as if trying to gather from them the meaning of words that sounded to her so strange and perplexing.

"I couldn't but think of you and your husband during the lecture," continued Tychicus. "You've had your plagues and your troubles."

"I've had a many o' them," muttered the miserable woman with something like a shiver.

"Ay; you've a husband given to drink and given to strike, and you know what it is to have a full heart and an empty cupboard; and there's your first-born smitten with fits, and there was your house well-nigh burnt over your head last Tuesday, and—"

"I don't need you to remind me of all this," cried Deborah sharply, for the rough reproof had galled a sore wound.

"You do need to be reminded that troubles are not sent for nothing. If you choose to stay behind in Egypt, you must look to come in for its plagues; and if you take your portion with the godless, you'll share their punishment in the end. Look to it, Deborah Stone, and take warning before it's too late!" and, satisfied that he had performed a Christian duty, Tychicus Bolder passed on in front, silently thanking God, in the spirit of the Pharisee, that he was not as that woman was!

Safe he considered himself to be; safe in his Bible-reading and church-going, in his good character and sober life; so safe, that he might rebuke, judge, and condemn those whose conduct was different from his own. And yet, could Tychicus Bolder have seen his own state as it was in the eyes of God, he would have strode on less proudly before that poor sinner with the thought, "I am holier than thou." The atoning blood

of the Lamb had never been sprinkled on that self-righteous heart—his guide towards Canaan was not God's Word, *The just shall live by faith*, but some vain notion of merit of his own, which drew him away from the right path to heaven. Had an Israelite, turning his back on the guiding pillar, taken what seemed to him the shortest and safest way to the Holy Land across the northern isthmus, amongst the Philistines he would have perished as surely as if he had lingered in Egypt. There are many paths that lead to destruction, but only *one* that leads to glory. Christ is *the way, the truth, and the life*.

"Mother, mother!" said Lottie appealingly; "you wouldn't have left me in Egypt, would you? You'd have taken me through the sea; and if I couldn't have walked all that long, long way, would not you have carried me in your arms, and not let the big dreadful waters roll all over and drown me?"

"Go along with ye, and don't be a-botherin'!" exclaimed the mother with a burst of impatience. The words sounded harsh, but they were only the overflowing of a heart full almost to breaking. Bolder's rebuke had stirred up anger; the appeal of the innocent child following the cottage lecture, had roused the mother to a terrible consciousness that, in her carelessness and neglect of the souls of her children, she had been acting a more cruel part than that of an Israelite woman who

should have left her babes to the enemy's sword in Egypt, or to the deluge of God's wrath in the bed of the sea. Groaning within herself, that miserable mother returned to her wretched home. The publican's anguish was upon her; but she had not yet learned the publican's prayer—*God be merciful to me, a sinner.*

On the following day, when Arthur for the third time taught his class, he found the hours spent with his pupils more full of interest, both to himself and to them, than on the previous occasions. The wonderful story of Moses dividing the sea, and of the destruction of the pursuing enemy, of which the boys had heard at the cottage lecture, had made an impression upon them. They liked to talk over the subject with their teacher, and the idea of being able to read for themselves such histories in the Bible, incited the scholars to more steadiness in submitting to the drudgery of learning. Arthur was pleased, as Christian teachers so often are pleased, at seeing the power of beautiful Scripture narratives to interest the minds of the young.

When Arthur had dismissed his little class, Gideon lingered behind the rest of the boys. He was, as has been observed, the dullest of Arthur's pupils, seldom uttering a word, and finding the alphabet offer almost insuperable difficulties. It was evident now that the boy had something to say, as he stood before Arthur, looking up at his teacher through the almost colourless

lashes which fringed his heavy gray eyes, while he pulled a straw to pieces ; for whenever Gideon had to exert his slow brain, he never seemed able to keep his rough red fingers quiet.

“ Well, my lad, have you anything to ask me ? ” inquired Arthur kindly.

“ Please, sir, mother wants you,” said the boy, relapsing into silence after the unusual effort of stringing five words together.

“ Doubtless,” thought Arthur, “ Deborah is going to make some application for money. It is very painful to go amongst the poor without having the means of relieving them—to have the appearance of wealth with the reality of dependence, so that I cannot expect to be believed if I say that I cannot do what I would. I have not the power to explain to the cottagers that the horse which they have seen me riding is not actually my own—that I am an inmate of the castle on sufferance—that if I receive an unfavourable answer from my uncle, I may have to sell my very watch to procure for myself the bare means of subsistence.” And Arthur felt a momentary pang of regret as he thought of the fortune which he should lose if the lawsuit were decided against him, and all the means of usefulness as well as of enjoyment which he would have sacrificed to a scruple. The tempter whispered, as he often had whispered before, “ Was such a sacrifice required ? was not conscientious-

ness carried to the point of weakness? have not your family good cause to brand your conduct as folly?" Such whispers sometimes inflict pain more acute than does the open scoff of the world; but neither must turn the Christian pilgrim from the course of duty marked out by the guiding pillar of God's Word. If it lead him *into* the depths, it will also lead him *through* them; and in the radiance of the great morning he shall look back on past trials with thankful wonder from the bright, everlasting shore!

Anticipating the disagreeable necessity of refusing a petition for pecuniary help, Arthur went towards the cottage of Stone. He passed Ford on the way, who touched his hat to the gentleman, but with a sullen air.

Arthur found Deborah alone, sitting on a broken-backed chair by her cottage fire. She rose on his entrance, went to the door, and closed it. Her face looked even more haggard than before, the lines on her brow deeper, and darker the purple tints under her hollow eyes.

"Oh! sir, you will tell me what to do!" exclaimed the poor woman, when Arthur had taken the chair which she placed for him, and she had resumed her own seat by the fire.

"You are in trouble, I fear," said Arthur.

"Sore trouble—sore trouble," muttered Deborah, swaying herself backwards and forwards like one in pain.

"Are you sick?" inquired young Madden.

"Sick at heart I am. I did not close an eye all night; and my husband—" Deborah stopped, and looked at her visitor with an expression of desolate heart-breaking sorrow, that touched the young man, for it recalled the horrors of the first morning on which he had seen her—crouching, bruised and bleeding, at the feet of an intoxicated ruffian.

"I know that your husband's conduct is a very great trial to you," began Arthur; but Deborah cut him short.

"He's no worse than other men!" she exclaimed; "I'm sure there's nobody as works harder, or would be a kinder husband or father if it warn't for the drink! But he ain't been used to church-goings or to church doings; and when I spoke to him this morning about having Gideon and Lottie baptized, why he was angered, he was—I've never seen him more angered in my life, save and except when he'd been a drinking."

"Have your children never been baptized then?" asked Arthur in some surprise.

"I never thought much about the matter," said Deborah, "till the parson put it so last night; and Bolder, he twitted me with bringing up my children as heathen. I'm sure," she continued, in a tone of self-defence, "I've worked and slaved for them children, I have. There's Gideon, my poor lad, I sat up with him three weeks, night after night; never had so much as a neighbour to

help ; I thought I'd have died from it after. It's the last thing as I looked for to have any one say as I did not take care of my children."

"I daresay that in many ways you have been a good, kind mother," said Arthur soothingly ; "there are no nicer children than yours in the village."

The hard lines in Deborah's face relaxed a little at the welcome word of praise. Arthur saw that he had gratified the feelings of the mother, and went on,—“But you know, my friend, that children have souls as well as bodies to be cared for. You would work hard, I am sure, to give your family food ; you must not neglect to give them that which is better than bread.”

“But what am I to do?” exclaimed Deborah Stone. “Abner don't choose to have 'em baptized ; I can't be going agin' my husband.”

To Arthur the office of a spiritual adviser was something so new and unexpected, and one for which he felt himself to be so little qualified, that he did not at once reply, but silently lifted up his heart in an aspiration for wisdom.

“What am I to do?” repeated Deborah, with an anxious, appealing look.

“I think that you must wait, and ask God to direct you, and make you obedient to all His commands,” said Arthur ; “and, in the meantime, there is much that you can do. Have you ever taught your children to pray?”

A look of grief and shame passed over the countenance of the mother. "They do pray, but I won't pretend that it was any of my teaching," she replied. "Since Lottie has been to Mrs. Holdich, she's got a deal put into her head, and all she hears she tells to her brother. There they sit together in that corner yonder—they al'ays kept close, them two. Gideon, he's the older; but Lottie's the sharper, and she larns him all that she knows. Would you believe it, sir," continued Deborah, with a mixture of pride and shame, "I found them two a-kneeling together last night in the back-room ahind the door, and praying for 'dear mother,' they was; bless their hearts! I could have cried when I heard them, after what that Bolder had said."

"And would it not be well if they prayed not only *for* their mother, but *with* their mother?" suggested Arthur.

"Oh, sir, what's such a one as me to do with praying!" exclaimed Deborah, with bitterness; "I've led a hard, drudging life, I have; it's been an up-hill struggle all along; I've had no time nor no heart for these things."

"The harder the life here, the more need of comfort from the hope of the life to come," said Arthur. "If you are burdened with cares and troubles, the more need that you should ask help from Him who has said, *Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*"

Never had Arthur himself so realized the sweetness of that invitation of mercy, as when permitted thus to repeat it to a weary wanderer. It was strange to him to find his own words flow so readily—the difficulty of speaking on the subject of religion seemed suddenly taken away. Arthur wondered what was passing in Deborah's mind as she fixed the gaze of her large black eyes on the smouldering fire with a sad and dreamy expression. Perhaps the verse of Scripture had once been familiar to her ear, and, like rain-drops upon withering herbs, had revived in her fading memories of better and happier days.

"You are able to read, are you not?" inquired Arthur.

"I was a good scholar when I was a girl," replied Deborah, without turning her gaze from the fire.

"I daresay, then, that you have a Bible?"

Deborah looked a little embarrassed, rose, and glanced around the untidy cottage. "There's one somewhere," she said,—“my school Bible—if I could lay my hands on it. Yes, here it be,” and from a shelf where it had lain amongst rubbish with a pewter pot placed upon it, the woman drew down an old broken-backed volume, which she dusted with her apron before she handed it to her guest.

"Mrs. Stone," said Arthur Madden, "if you would have your children fear God in this world, and not fall

short of heaven at last, teach them, both by your words and your example, to prize and reverence His holy Word. Remember that this book is as truly God's gift, and our appointed guide to heaven, as that glorious pillar of which we heard last evening was the Israelites' guide to Canaan."

"I cared for my Bible once!" cried Deborah, with quivering lip and faltering voice, "but it's many a year since I've looked into it. I won't deceive you, sir. I've not been thinking of God, nor a-looking to Him, nor a-praying to Him, till the night of the fire, and then I couldn't help myself, and I cried aloud in my fear."

"And God heard you," added Arthur Madden.

"It was the innocent child as He heard," said Deborah, mournfully shaking her head. "God knew that I'd been turning my back on His mercy all along, that I'd been wandering right out of the way—it's too late now for me to change—I've no more hope either living or dying!" Again Deborah seated herself by the fire, with dull, sullen despair in her dry, tearless eyes.

"Will you allow me to read to you a little out of this Bible?" said Arthur, after a moment of hesitation.

"As you please, sir," was the listless reply.

Arthur unclosed the sacred volume, the treasure-casket which had so long lain neglected and despised in that miserable home. He turned to the fifteenth chapter of

St. Luke, and in a low, reverential tone, without making any comment as he went on, read the parable of the prodigal son. Save the sound of his voice, and the crackling of the fagot on the fire, there was the most perfect stillness in the cottage. Arthur felt, as he read aloud



ARTHUR AND DEBORAH.

the Saviour's most touching words, that his own weak, unpractised hand was grasping an instrument of power. Deborah sat silently listening, with her thin fingers pressed tightly together, and slowly and gradually the moisture rose in her eyes. When Arthur closed the Bible and looked at her, he could see them glistening in the fire-light.

"Will you please to put a mark in there, sir," said

the woman; "I should like to read that bit over again to myself."

"And to your children," suggested Arthur.

"Bless them, they've never been prodigals!" faltered Deborah. "But oh, sir, if I could but think that story was meant for such as me!"

"It is meant for those who have wandered into the 'far country,'" said Arthur; "it is meant for those who have lain under the bondage of sin, and have found that its bondage is hard."

"Hard, hard indeed," muttered Deborah to herself. "But ain't I too old to change now?" she continued, again looking appealingly at the visitor who had brought her God's message of peace.

"Young and old, all forsook Egypt, the gray-headed as well as the babes," said Arthur. "Whenever we feel our need of deliverance, then is the time to say, *I will arise and go.*"

"But it's nigh impossible to be religious in a place like this," exclaimed Deborah Stone. "You don't know what it is, sir, you who was brought up so different, and haven't nobody to be a-pulling you back when you want to turn the right way. You can't think what a deal I have to hinder me from ever getting to heaven."

"I do, indeed," said Arthur, with feeling, aware as he was that fearful difficulties must beset that poor, hard-working, afflicted woman, in attempting to tread a

heavenward path. "But remember how hard must the command to go forward have seemed to Moses, when the great rolling sea lay before him ; and yet God who gave the command, gave also the power to obey it. Just set your face steadfastly towards heaven, pray for grace, and look to the Bible for guidance, and you'll find a way opened before you, as the Israelites did through the sea."

"Bless you for that, it's the first word of real comfort I've heard for many a long day," cried Deborah ; "and God will bless you, sir, for you're a-doing His work. You'll come and see me again?" she added anxiously, as Arthur rose to depart.

Arthur readily gave the promise required, and then left that low wretched abode with feelings of deeper interest and more thankful hope than he had ever known in quitting the dwellings of the rich or the happy. We have read of a young clergyman who literally leapt for joy* on leaving a house where he had for the first time received from a sick penitent the assurance that his labours had been blessed as the means of converting a soul. Something of that joy, that foretaste of heavenly delight, thrilled through the soul of Arthur, mixed with a sensation of wonder that he, young, inexperienced, unworthy, should have been permitted to minister comfort to the distressed, and counsel

* The Rev. — Forsyth.

to the ignorant and sinful. Such privilege is often granted to those who have unreservedly submitted themselves to do or to suffer God's will, and who find that in *keeping of His commandments there is* (even on earth) *great reward*. *Behold*, said the Lord to the Church of Philadelphia, *I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it, for thou hast a little strength; and hast kept My word, and hast not denied My name*.

It was interesting to Arthur to recall to mind the extreme repugnance with which, but a week before, he had regarded the idea of working at Wildwaste. How hard he had tried to persuade himself that he had no call to do so, that his time was too short, too uncertain, that he was too young and inexperienced, that he would be able to do no good! He had seen the vineyard-door open before him, but he had shrunk from entering in. Let none deem that the difficulty of *doing much* is an excuse for *attempting nothing*; that the one talent (because it is but one) may be hidden and yet no guilt be incurred. God can make one passing sentence as effectual as the most eloquent sermon; and some of the most glorious works for God have been accomplished by those who had nothing to give to His poor except their time and their prayers.

Arthur had not gone many yards from Deborah's cottage before he came up to Lottie, who was standing near, evidently waiting for him to come out. The child

greeted him with a shy, bright smile, and held up to him a little rudely-fashioned basket made out of plaited green rushes, containing a few of the autumn wild-flowers.

"Will you have it?—I made it for you!" said the little rustic; and she coloured with pleasure when Arthur took her present, praised and admired it, promised to show it to his sister, and to keep it carefully for Lottie Stone's sake.

"I shall value this little basket," thought Arthur, as he went on his way, "far more than many a costly gift that I have received from the wealthy. What pleasure the child had in giving it, and doubtless in making it! The materials may be rude, and the workmanship rough, but the feeling which prompted the offering stamps a value on all. So may it be with our own works, rough, imperfect, and worthless in themselves; they are not rejected nor thrown away because our poverty can give no more than, as it were, twisted rushes, with a few little blossoms within."

Love, joy, peace, these are the fruits of the Spirit; why do we see so little of them even upon trees that we doubt not to be of the Lord's planting? Is it not that there is still so much of selfishness walling them in, that the full sunshine falls not upon them; that so much of the world's dust rests on their leaves, that they lose the freshness of spiritual life? With Arthur that wall of selfishness, the gradual accumulation of years, had to

a great extent been thrown down, and his heart had expanded in the light. He had made his decision between God and the world, and joy and peace had followed that decision. It is those who *halt between two opinions*, that can neither enjoy the polluted pleasures of the world nor the happiness bestowed by religion.

When Arthur reached the castle, he found a party of the neighbouring gentry, invited by Mrs. Madden, assembling for luncheon. It seemed a somewhat abrupt transition from the clay-floored cottage of the sorrowing penitent, to the gay drawing-room with its bright throng of lively guests. But Arthur carried no morose spirit into the party; on the contrary, he was more bright and genial than ever, more ready to amuse and to be amused. The fire of the preceding Tuesday naturally formed a topic of general conversation, as it had been a subject of general interest. Its origin, generally supposed to be the carelessness of a servant girl, who had left a candle so near an open window that the breeze had blown the curtain against the flame, and the question whether it were right or wrong to give assistance to Ford, who was diligently canvassing the neighbourhood for money to make up his loss, were discussed, and various opinions given. Lina was gratified to see that her favourite brother was regarded as the hero of the conflagration. Seated on an ottoman beside one of the lady guests, Lina eagerly answered, in fullest detail, questions relating to the part

taken by Arthur in the stirring events of the night, a subject which he himself avoided as far as he could. She was delighted to hear Arthur praised and admired, all the more so, it is to be feared, because his exaltation seemed to her to be a kind of triumph over Lionel and Cora. It amused the young girl to stir up the feelings of bitterness and envy which it would have been the office of wisdom to smooth down. In a spirit of petty revenge, Lina took pleasure in widening the breach in the family, by forcing on the notice of the elder members that he whom they had despised and insulted stood on far higher ground than themselves.

"Arthur is in grand spirits to-day," observed Cora to Lionel, with one of her vinegar looks, as they chanced to stand near each other on the lawn, engaged in a game of croquet. "We shall never hear the end of that fire; and I should not wonder if a medal were struck in honour of the hero!"

"Shallow brains are easily turned," muttered Lionel, with a sneer; "I should like to knock the folly and vanity out of him!" and the young man struck with his mallet the ball at his feet with a force which sent it whirling off into the bordering shrubbery, far wide of the hoop through which he had intended to drive it.



CHAPTER XXI.



BEFORE the lecture on the following Tuesday, Arthur had twice repeated his visit to the cottage of Deborah Stone, and each visit had increased his interest in, and pity for her and her children. Heavy and dark indeed was the cloud which rested on Deborah's home. Ford had not gone up to London, as she had hoped and desired; the publican lingered about the ruins of his dwelling, making every effort in his power to raise from others sufficient means to rebuild it. While Deborah's husband was at the factory, Ford was also absent on long walking expeditions, of which he gave no account; but the unwelcome guest always returned with the shades of evening, and either lured away Abner to squander his wages at the "Black Bear," or, what was worse still, sat drinking and gambling with him in the cottage till midnight, or even later. So much of Abner's earnings went in spirits, consumed by himself and the man who seemed to be his evil genius, that Deborah had hardly sufficient to save

herself and her children from starvation ; while broken rest, fear, and trouble deepened the furrows on her care-worn face, and gave a look of premature thought and sadness even to that of Lottie. Arthur had never realized the heavy trials of the poor till thus brought into personal contact with them. To read of thousands groaning beneath the iron pressure of poverty less awakens the warm sympathies of the heart than to behold the sufferings of one. Arthur did what he could for Deborah Stone. He overcame his dislike to asking favours, and procured for her some of the washing from the Castle ; he also gained Mrs. Madden's smiling permission that the Stones should have some of the fragments left from her luxurious meals. These fragments Arthur carried to the cottage himself, pelted by the rain—for the weather had set in very wet—and yet more severely pelted by the ridicule of the family. Cora and Lionel might possibly have put down their names for a charitable donation, or have dropped gold into a church-plate, but the idea of a highly-educated, refined young man really *caring* for the troubles of a washerwoman, really taking scraps of food under his cloak to feed hungry children in a dirty hovel, became an unfailing theme for satire and scoffing. Arthur had the approval of conscience to shield him from the effect of ridicule, as he had a cloak to keep off the rain, so he went through both with cheerful resolution. But Lina felt her brother degraded by the humble offices to

which he stooped ; she could not endure to see him, as she said, "go splashing through the mud to waste his golden hours in teaching the alphabet to miserable children, or paying visits in wretched hovels where the very air which he breathed was sickening !" Such work, she thought, suited Bible-women or Scripture-readers ; it was beneath her noble—her gifted brother ! Let him be charitable, let him be religious, but only so far as might be consistent with personal comfort and personal dignity.

Arthur, as we know, did not regard the subject in the same light. He was beginning to feel that work for God is the highest work, and its reward of all rewards the most sweet. He had been pleased in finding that Deborah now turned to her long-neglected Bible for comfort, instead of sinking into listless despair. But for him, that fountain of blessing might to her have for ever remained sealed. The boys of Arthur's class also, with all their waywardness and wilfulness, were acquiring from their young teacher some knowledge of the truth. Arthur rejoiced to recognize in the steward's cottage, on the Tuesday evening, many a familiar face from the once almost heathen hamlet of Wildwaste.

LECTURE VI.—MOSES AS LEADER.

I do not intend to trace out in detail the wanderings of the children of Israel ; this has already been done in

a very interesting work,* which should find a place in every lending library. In these short lectures I shall rather confine myself to consideration of the character and office of Moses, regarding him as a type of the Saviour, and drawing from his history some practical lessons for ourselves. In this and the two following lectures I propose especially to direct your attention to Moses as the Leader, Moses as the Lawgiver, and Moses as the Intercessor for Israel.

I shall also divide into three portions the time which elapsed between the people's passage of the Red Sea and their reaching Kadesh, on the southern border of Canaan, from whence Moses sent forth spies to survey the Promised Land. The portion of time which we shall briefly review this evening will be the first two months which followed after the destruction of Pharaoh and his host. On our next meeting, if God will, we shall consider the eleven months and nineteen days passed by the Israelites at the foot of Mount Sinai, when the Law was given to Moses. The succeeding lecture will be on events occurring within a period of less than a year, and will bring us to the time when the Israelites, having almost entered the Holy Land, almost attained the promised blessing, delayed the enjoyment of their inheritance, through their own cowardice and unbelief, for thirty-eight long years more, and were turned back to wander again in the

* By Krummacher.

wilderness, till their appointed forty years of trial should be completed, and all but two of the elder generation should have died and laid their bones in the desert.

And first, then, we will this evening consider Moses as the Leader of the people, during the first two months of their long weary wanderings.

Only three days after their quitting the shore of the Red Sea we find the children of Israel in trouble; their late song of triumph changed into murmurs of distress. Faint and thirsting in the wilderness of Shur, the hosts had reached a well called Marah; and, to their grievous disappointment, had found its waters so bitter that the people could not bear to drink them. The torment of thirst, rendered more intolerable by the glowing heat of the clime, wrung a cry of anguish from the sufferers. But God had mercy upon them, and showed to their Leader a tree which, when cast in the well, made the bitter waters sweet. The multitudes drank and were refreshed.

Again; we behold the hosts of Israel afflicted with hunger. The supply of bread which they had carried with them from Egypt was quickly exhausted; the people saw starvation before them in the wild, pathless deserts, where no corn would grow, where the rich fruits and vegetables of fertile Egypt were not to be found. Instead of patiently trusting Him who had so often brought them deliverance, a spirit of murmuring and unbelief spread through the camp of Israel. *Would to*

God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt ! cried the people ; when we sat by the flesh-pots, when we did eat bread to the full ; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger !

Sorely, was the patience of Moses tried by the constant backsliding of the people whom he was appointed to lead. Not all the wonders of love and power which they had beheld were sufficient to make them trust that love and that power for the future. *Yea, they spake against God ; they said, Can God furnish a table in the wilderness ?* The answer to such murmurings was another stupendous miracle of goodness. God *did* spread a table in the wilderness, and cover the barren earth with abundance. *In the evening quails came up, and in the morning the dew lay round about the host. And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground. And the house of Israel called the name thereof manna : and it was like coriander-seed, white, and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey. So men did eat angels' food ; He gave them bread to the full.* This heavenly supply of manna, renewed day by day, on every morn but that of the Sabbath, lasted for almost forty years, till Israel came to a land inhabited, until they came unto the borders of the land of Canaan.

Guided by the pillar of cloud and fire, the people now continued their journey over a sandy, stony waste. Again trial came upon them ; again courage, faith, and patience gave way under the trial. So feeble is human nature, so true is the scriptural account of man—*the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.* There was a grievous want of water in the dry and thirsty waste ; and again with fierce impatience the people turned to their Leader, and heaped upon him reproaches as bitter as they were unjust and ungrateful.

Deeply wounded by such reproaches, and, we may well believe, bitterly disappointed that his self-denying love should meet with no better return, Moses laid the burden of his griefs before the God who would never forsake him. *What shall I do unto this people ?* he cried ; *they be almost ready to stone me !*

We scarcely know whether most to wonder at the perverseness of the people, or the patience of the Lord whom they so often provoked. Moses again received command to supply the need of Israel by an act of supernatural power. *Behold,* said the Lord, *I will stand before thee upon the rock in Horeb, and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it that the people may drink.*

Moses took his rod and obeyed ; forth gushed from the rock the life-giving stream ! The fainting multitudes pressed eagerly round it, and their parched lips drank



MOSES SMITING THE ROCK.

deeply of the gift of their God. *He clave the rocks in the wilderness, and gave them drink as out of the great depths.*

A new peril was soon to try the courage of the Israelites, when they had pitched their tents at a place called Rephidim. The people were attacked by the Amalekites, a fierce and powerful tribe, descended from Esau, the brother of Jacob. This was the Israelites' first experience

of actual warfare : the Lord Himself had fought for them against the powerful hosts of Pharaoh ; but now it was His will that they should fight for themselves. And thus it is with us, my brethren. Our great deliverance from the power of Satan was wrought by the Saviour *alone* ; but in our pilgrimage through life we must look for a long, arduous struggle against manifold temptations ; we must fight the good fight of faith against our besetting sins.

Moses called to himself Joshua, a young man distinguished for faith and courage, and confided to him the charge of repelling the foe, at the head of a band of chosen men. Moses himself, accompanied by Aaron and Hur, who is believed to have been the husband of his sister Miriam, ascended a hill, and there engaged in fervent prayer for his brethren fighting below. Most interesting and most instructive is the account in the Bible of the effect of this fervent prayer : *When Moses held up his hand, Israel prevailed ; and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed.* The arm of the saint raised in supplication did more for the cause of God's people than the arm of the hero raised in fight.

There are some amongst us, my friends, whom sickness or other cause seems to shut out from active effort for God and His Church. Such cannot, as it were, fight like Joshua on the plain ; but with Moses on the height they can pray. Who dare attempt to measure the

amount of blessings which may be drawn down by such prayers breathed from the sick-bed or the prison ?

Moses grew weary ; his hands were heavy. *Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side ; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword ;* victory was granted to those who fought, in answer to the supplication of him who prayed.

There is but one more incident connected with the wanderings through the wilderness, to which I will at present refer. We know very little of Moses in private life, or how he appeared as a father and a husband ; but his intense love for an ungrateful nation, and the gentleness of spirit which mingled in him with strong faith and heroic courage, make it more than probable that towards his family he showed deep and tender affection. What, then, must have been his yearning to see dear and familiar faces, when the guiding pillar led them towards the very spot where forty peaceful years of his life had been passed, and where he knew that his wife and his sons now dwelt ! What must have been the joy of Moses when his father-in-law, the venerable priest of Midian, appeared, bringing with him to the Leader of Israel his sons and Zipporah, their mother, who came to perform the part of a faithful wife, by sharing the pilgrimage of her husband !

It seems strange that of the sons of the great Leader we should know so little but the names, Gershom, "*A stranger there ;*" Eliezer, "*My God is a help.*" We do not hear of them as princes in Israel, as leaders, or even priests. Moses is a most remarkable instance of a man completely emptied of either personal or family ambition, seeking great things upon earth neither for himself nor for his children. But we may well hope that, though Gershom and his brother were not highly distinguished amongst men,* they were of those whom God will acknowledge as His own when he maketh up His jewels. Nadab and Abihu, sons of Aaron, were raised to high position as priests, and for abusing their sacred office were destroyed by fire from the Lord : happier far the sons of Moses, if in a lowly state they did their duty to God and to man, and never brought the blush of shame to a mother's cheek, nor grief to the heart of a pious father !

Jethro appears to have been both a wise and a religious man. Beautiful is the account of the reverence and love with which the old priest of Midian was received by Moses. The Leader of the hosts of Israel, he who had been exalted by God above all other living men, *went*

* The descendants of Moses were only ministers to the priests, as were the other Levites. The posterity of Moses are reckoned amongst the Kohathites (Num. iii. 27).—BISHOPS PATRICK and KIDDER. Their work was in the Tabernacle. It is interesting to find (1 Chron. xxvi. 24) that more than four hundred and seventy years after the Exodus from Egypt, in the time of King David, Shebuel, the descendant of Gershom, the son of Moses, was *ruler of the treasures*. We also read that at the same period the children of Rehabiah, the descendant of Eliezer the second son of Moses, were very *many* (1 Chron. xxiii. 17).

out to meet his father-in-law, and did obeisance, and kissed him ; and they asked each other of their welfare, and they came into the tent.

It is pleasant to imagine the conversation within that tent, to which, we may be well assured, Zipporah and her sons were deeply interested listeners. Moses recounted to Jethro *all that the Lord had done unto Pharaoh and to the Egyptians for Israel's sake, and all the travail that had come upon them by the way, and how the Lord delivered them.* These words strikingly bring before us Moses in his forgetfulness of *self*. The heroic Leader thus describes stupendous miracles as if he had had no part in working them : it was *the Lord* who had wrought deliverance—and *for Israel's sake*, not his own.

Jethro rejoiced for *all the goodness which the Lord had done to Israel ; he praised, blessed, and offered sacrifices to the Lord of Hosts.* He showed also a fatherly care for the noble man who was spending and being spent in the service of an ungrateful people. Jethro saw Moses devoting his energies, and exhausting his strength, in judging from morning till night the multitude of petty causes that were brought before him. The wise and kind-hearted old priest felt that though the Leader's self-devotion might not fail, his health would certainly break down under a long-continued strain, and he gave Moses a loving rebuke for overtasking his strength.

The thing that thou doest is not good. Thou wilt surely wear away ; for this thing is too heavy for thee ; thou art not able to perform it thyself alone. Jethro advised Moses to choose out able, God-fearing men, to assist him in judging the people, and to relieve him of part of the burden under which the powers, however great, of a single man must give way.

Moses had not the pride which refuses counsel. *He hearkened to the voice of his father-in-law, and did all that he said.*

This visit of Jethro to the camp must have been a sweet refreshment to the spirit of Moses, like one of the pleasant spots of verdure shaded with palm-trees, which in some places brightened even the desert. Jethro departed to his own home ; but we find Hobab, his son, with the Israelites when they were about to move from the neighbourhood of Horeb towards the Promised Land. He received an affectionate invitation from his brother-in-law to remain always beside him. *Come thou with us, and we will do thee good . . . leave us not, I pray thee . . . and it shall be, if thou go with us, yea it shall be, that what goodness the Lord shall do unto us the same will we do unto thee.* The invitation seems to have been accepted, for we find the descendants of Jethro, after the time of Joshua, going up from Jericho with the children of Israel, and dwelling as brethren among the chosen people (Judges i. 16).

And now, dear friends, let us again raise our thoughts from the servant to the Master, from the earthly to the heavenly Leader! Following the line traced out by the history of Moses, let us consider the blessed Saviour as He is to His people when in *sorrow*, in *need*, and in *conflict*.

What is Christ to His people in sorrow? Sorrow is the shadow of sin, and it lies over all this fallen world. We go but a short way on our pilgrimage of life ere we come to the bitter waters of Marah. Where are the eyes that have never wept—where is the heart that has never bled! I need not pause to describe the various forms of sorrow, sickness, bereavement, poverty, pain, falsehood in those whom we have trusted, unkindness from those whom we have loved. *The heart knoweth its own bitterness*; some grief is the heritage of all. But, by the cross upon which He suffered, our blessed Leader has for His people brought healing to the bitter waters of life. The thought, “Christ has *sent* and has *shared* my sorrows, He can *bless*, and He will *end* them,” can give sweet and holy peace even in sore tribulation. He hath *sent* the trial; yea, for *whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth*. He hath *shared* it, for the Son of God was *a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief*. He can *bless* the bitterest affliction, for *all things work together for good to them that love Him*; and He will *end* grief for ever in that blessed home, where *God shall wipe away*

all tears from their eyes ; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain. Well was the power of our heavenly Leader to sweeten the bitter waters shown in the experience of the aged saint who, when stripped of every earthly comfort, could say, "I used to enjoy Christ in all things, and now I can enjoy all things in Christ."

What is our Leader to his people in their *need*? We are helpless, and full of wants ; like the Israelites in the desert, we require to be every hour sustained by the watchful providence of God. Does poverty force from us the anxious cry, *What shall we eat, what shall we drink, and wherewithal shall we be clothed?* let us remember the power of Him who spread a table in the wilderness, who brought the feathered fowls of the air to feed the multitudes of Israel. There is deeper meaning in the manna which, day by day, supplied the need of those who were God's chosen people upon earth. In this *angels' food* we have a type of that which alone can give nourishment and life to the soul hungering after righteousness. The Lord Jesus said, referring to the miracle wrought in the desert, *The bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life to the world. I am the bread of life ; he that cometh to Me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst.* Christ alone can supply all our need, both as regards the body and the soul.

What is our Lord to His people in *conflict*? Here again in Israel, attacked and fighting, we see a picture of ourselves in an evil world. We, as I said before, must fight the good fight of faith; we must give battle to sin; we must withstand both the open and secret attacks of "the world, the flesh, and the devil." But the battle is too hard for us, if we fight it in strength of our own. Amalek would have put Israel to flight, had Moses not prayed on the hill. We should yield to our manifold temptations, did not our Leader plead for His people. When we are tempted to distrust God's love, or to disobey His commandments; when our unruly passions or our evil tempers are pressing us sore, or wicked companions or fierce persecutors would put our good resolutions to flight, let us cry aloud to Him who was *tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin*. Let us say with the Psalmist, *I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help: my help cometh from the Lord which made heaven and earth*. Oh, my much tried and afflicted brethren, hear to your comfort this sweet word of promise: *God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will, with the temptation, also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it*.

Let us then, with full assurance of faith, press on towards heaven—our Canaan—under the guidance of a Leader who will never leave us or forsake. We may

indeed tread a dry and thirsty wilderness. Trials without, temptations within may oppress us, and our hearts may oftentimes fail ; but the Son of God is our Leader ; and He can give, and will give to those who love and trust in Him, comfort in sorrow, help in need, and victory in conflict. To Him be the glory for ever !





CHAPTER XXII.

A FOUNT OF BITTERNESS.

MR. MADDEN'S boys," as they called themselves, before they sallied forth from the cottage of Holdich, expected and received a kind look and nod from Arthur. So much did they count upon them, that it is probable that either absence or neglect of this trifling courtesy on the part of the teacher would have perceptibly thinned the attendance at the next cottage meeting.

"I hope, my boys, that you have learned something this evening?" said Arthur, as he followed his pupils into the outer room, leaving Mr. Eardley, whom he had interested in the trials of Deborah, to speak quietly to the poor woman.

"Ay, sir; yes, sir," answered two or three voices at once.

"What have you learned?" asked the teacher.

"That we'll have some fighting, sir," answered Jack

Thomson, a merry-eyed boy, who had been foremost in frolic and mischief.

"Yes; but what kind of fighting?" pursued Arthur.

"Fighting against our sins," said Tommy Higgs.

"And do you know what that means?"

"Yes," said Jack Thomson, eager to speak; "we mustn't swear, nor drink, nor lie, nor snatch the plums out of Bolder's shop when his back's a-turned.

"Quite true," observed Arthur, smiling at the very practical view of the subject taken by the boy.

"And, sir," continued Jack Thomson, "we don't beat Lottie Stone no more, and we don't let no one else beat her; and when she lost her hen, I found it and caught it for her, sir, I did!" The little fellow's face brightened under the consciousness that for once in his life he had done a kind and generous action.

Arthur's heart warmed towards his boys as he bade them good-night, and saw them set out on their homeward way, and heard the sound of their blithe young voices dying away in the distance as they trudged together towards the common. When he turned round, little Lottie in her red cloak was standing beside him. She was looking timidly up into his face, with a question expressed in her large black eyes.

"Had you something to ask me, Lottie?" said Arthur, kindly stooping down to hear the reply of the little girl, whose voice was low, though earnest.

"Oh, sir, do you think if we prayed very hard God would send us some quails and manna?—for we're sometimes very hungry, mother, Gideon, and me."

"God hears prayer now just as He did in the days of Moses," replied Arthur; "but God has his own way of answering it. We must not expect quails and manna now; but if we pray hard God will send help in some other way."

"Did God send you yesterday with the jelly soup, that was so good, when we had nothing left?" asked Lottie.

"I believe that God did," replied Arthur; and there was pleasure in uttering the words.

"Then God sent you too to read the Bible to mother. And now she reads a bit of an evening to Gideon and me; we does so like to hear it."

"May you always prize God's Word, Lottie," said Arthur, gently laying his hand on the little girl's shoulder; "it is like the manna, which should be gathered day by day;—and which is *sweeter than the honey and the honeycomb*," added Arthur to himself, in the words of the Psalmist.

"I shall always have a pleasant recollection of Wild-waste," thought Arthur, as he walked back to the castle. "If my lot be cast in a distant land, one of my sweetest reminiscences of old England will be connected with that hamlet."

What! was all forgotten that had made that dreary spot so repulsive? Was it possible that memory could gild the red brick manufactory, with its cloud of air-polluting smoke—the surrounding swamps, the wretched cottages—abodes of ignorance and sin! Yet let any earnest, loving worker for God be asked with what feelings he regards the place—however destitute of outward attractions, in which he has laboured for souls, and has seen the first fruits of his labours—and we shall find that Arthur's is no singular case. I believe that even in heaven itself memory may recall with fond delight crowded ragged-schools, wretched garrets, dark damp cellars, hospital wards, from which the visitor would have shrunk in disgust, had not Christian love called him thither to impart blessings, and receive them back repaid a hundred-fold into his own bosom.

Almost at the moment that Arthur entered the spacious lighted hall of the castle, he was met by Lina, whose excited face bespoke her the bearer of news.

"Oh, Arthur, it has come off just as we expected!" she exclaimed.

"What—the lawsuit?" cried her brother with eagerness.

"Oh no, nothing so good as that; the lawsuit will never be ended, I think! but—just before dinner, Mrs. Madden came in smiling and red as a peony, and introduced Sir Thomas Brereton to us all—as—"

"As her affianced husband, I suppose."

Lina shrugged her shoulders in assent.

Arthur looked grave and thoughtful; this was not what he could have wished, but it was what he had expected, and he felt that he had no right to complain.

"So, of course," continued Lina, detaining her brother in the hall, that they might converse more at ease, "there was a wishing of happiness, and a shaking of hands, we looking a little awkward and stiff, Mrs. Madden placidly happy, and Sir Thomas provokingly bland. But, Arthur, what do you think," Lina lowered her voice, though no one but herself and brother was present, "when we went in to dinner, Sir Thomas quietly took the bottom of the table, with a little smile and half bow to Mrs. Madden, as if he would say, 'I'm something more than a guest now, henceforth the master's place is my right.'"

"How did Lionel take that?" said Arthur, with interest.

"Take it! you should have seen his face when he found himself so quietly turned out of his seat! I don't know what you will do, Arthur, but I am certain that Lionel will be off to London or somewhere to-morrow!"

"I only hope that the morning's post may bring a letter from my uncle which will enable me to go to town," said Arthur. "And how," he continued, "did Sir Thomas conduct himself during dinner-time?"

"Oh, he has left the fawning and taken to the patronizing style," answered Lina. "He called us by our Christian names, and *deared* us—I am sure that to us he is anything but dear! And then to hear him talk of his boys—his dreadful boys—Tom, Harry, Bertram, and the rest,—how this one loves practical jokes, and that one blowing on the cornet; how Bill cut off his aunt's harp-strings to make fishing-lines, and Tom practised pistol-shooting with his great uncle's portrait as a target! Oh dear! oh dear! and the wedding is to be in November; that the boys may all pass their holidays here! What on earth shall we do?"

"I suppose," said Arthur, with a smile at his sister's look of dismay, "that the young fellows are much like other school-boys, and that their coming will not be quite as bad as an irruption of the Goths and the Vandals. But we must go to the drawing-room now, my wee thing. Our advice has not been asked in this matter, but it seems both wisdom and duty to make the best of it now."

It was more possible for Arthur to "make the best" of what caused him anxiety and pain, than it was for his sisters and brother. When in treading 'life's wilderness we have but followed our own pleasure, and chosen our own path, and we suddenly find the well on whose refreshment we had been relying choked up or embittered, no marvel if we sit down by its brink in sore perplexity

and distress. But if we have been following a higher Guide, though perplexed we need never despair, for we shall feel that a blessing lies at the bottom of even the bitterest trial. Arthur's spirit had been braced by the social prayer in which he so lately had joined ; he could take a calmer and more hopeful view of his step-mother's engagement, though perfectly aware that its result would probably be to deprive himself and his family of a home. Though Sir Thomas's manner was to him repulsive, and his society disagreeable, Arthur thought that it would be ungenerous to swell the violent tide of prejudice which was setting in against the knight. Mrs. Madden had a right to form a union from which she expected happiness, and the anger and contempt which her so doing raised in the hearts of her step-children seemed ungrateful in those to whom she (whatever her faults and follies might be) had shown herself hospitable and kind. This was Arthur's view of the matter, and it kept his mind quiet and tranquil, while those of the other Maddens were lost in a flood of angry passions.

"Come with me, Arthur dearest," said Lina, after breakfast on the following morning ; "help me to gather fresh flowers for the vases in the drawing-room. It is not yet time for you to set out for your horrid Wild-waste. There—don't look grave at me, Arthur, I need cheering—indeed I do. Sir Thomas was so intolerable this morning, and then all that talk about the wedding

arrangements! And oh, how weary one grows of waiting day after day for the decision in the law-court, suspense gets so sickening at last!"

Arthur stooped and kissed away the tear which had stolen down the fair young cheek of his sister, then drew her hand within his arm, and sauntered down the steps with her towards the garden, with an almost fatherly feeling of protecting love.

"You have always been so hopeful about the result of the suit, my wee thing," said he.

"Oh yes, of course," replied Lina, quickly; "and the last accounts from our lawyer have been so encouraging. You know that Mr. Barker wrote that nothing was delaying the business now but waiting for the evidence of Samuel Green from Australia, and that is certain to be in our favour, for the same will in which his master bequeathed us our fortunes held the legacy of a thousand pounds to himself, so he has good reason to prove it valid. But oh, Arthur, the thought of the bare *possibility* of Edward Verner's gaining his suit, and leaving us in destitution to the mercy of that odious Sir Thomas, comes over me sometimes with such a thrill, it makes me so wretched!" Lina paused, closed her eyes, and Arthur felt that her arm was trembling. He hardly knew what comfort to give, for he himself was very doubtful as to the issue of the law suit, and he was painfully conscious that poor Lina could not receive that

comfort from the knowledge that all would be ordered by wisdom and love, which gave his own heart courage to face every earthly trial.

"How the rain has beaten down and spoilt these flowers!" exclaimed Lina, with a sudden effort to turn her attention to some other subject. "There must have been hail last night; we shall soon be looking for frosts! All the beauty of the season is fading! Ah, me! winter, dreary winter, is before us!"

"Holly-berries and misletoe, the Yule log and the Christmas carols!" said Arthur cheerfully, as he stooped to gather for his sister the fairest flowers that the storm had spared, shaking the heavy moisture from them before he placed them in her basket. While he was thus engaged, a rapid step was heard on the gravel path, and Cora, looking excited, flushed, and indignant, came up to her brother and sister.

"Lina, I'll follow Lionel to London—I'll not stand this any longer," exclaimed the young lady in a voice hoarse with anger.

"What has happened?" asked Lina, anxiously.

"I went into the study to tell Mrs. Madden that I must give Elizabeth warning—she is so handless and slow, and never makes dresses to fit—and there was Sir Thomas sitting at the table, looking at accounts, or something of the sort. Of course it was no business of his whether we changed our lady's-maid or not, so I said

what I had to say to Mrs. Madden, taking no notice of his presence. When I had done, he raised his head—he, whose opinion nobody had asked! ‘I am very glad, my dear,’ he said, addressing himself to Mrs. Madden, ‘that our Cora’s good sense has suggested to her the very step of which we have just been speaking. It is far better for young ladies to be independent of the assistance of maids; my own aunts—most elegant women—made their own gowns, and dressed their own hair.’”

“The old horror!” exclaimed Lina Madden; “and what did you answer to that?”

“I was so taken aback that I could not speak for several minutes. Sir Thomas had time to run off into one of his tedious harangues about the advantage of ladies being able to do everything—down to cooking and mending old shoes, I believe, and how he had known most charming and accomplished creatures who had gone out as teachers, or humble companions, rather than be *burdens on their friends*.”

Lina dropped her basket with a start, and unconsciously stamped on the flowers strewn at her feet.

“Then I could not contain myself any longer,” continued Cora, who was in a state of passionate excitement; “I told the insolent upstart that he was heartily welcome to have all *his* friends and relatives governesses and humble companions if he liked it, but that I begged him to take no concern about the management of our affairs.

And so I left him to twirl his whiskers, and talk humbug to the woman whom he has flattered into such ridiculous folly."

"Was it well, Cora," said Arthur, "to insult in the very presence of Mrs. Madden the man whom she has accepted as her husband?"

"*You* may fawn, *you* may play the sycophant, you are always ready to look after your own interests!" exclaimed Cora contemptuously to the brother who had so lately proved his willingness to sacrifice interest to duty.

"Why, here comes Lionel!" cried Lina in surprise; "I thought that he had just started for London. Are you stopping for the next train?" she inquired of her brother, as with long hasty strides the young man joined the party in the garden.

Lionel uttered an exclamation that sounded much like an oath. He too had come to give vent to the torrent of angry passion which was boiling within.

"I had not cash for the journey, I went to ask Mrs. Madden for ten pounds—she was in her study with that"—Lionel stopped as if to search for some fitting epithet of opprobrium, but not finding one strong enough, made an expressive contortion of the lips instead. "When I told her what I wanted, she did not answer, but glanced at *him*, as if she had not a soul or a tongue of her own. So he looked up in his patronizing way"—Lionel mimicked the tone and gesture of Sir Thomas—"My dear Lionel,

we have been agreeing together that—until matters in London are more—more decided—it is no kindness to encourage you to run further into debt. Perhaps, my dear fellow, you are not aware that at the present moment you owe this liberal friend—let me see—£239, 9s., for money already advanced.’ ”

“Did you ever !” exclaimed Lina.

“Could you refrain from striking him in the face ?” cried Cora.

“I’d have given anything to have done so, my fingers itched !” said Lionel, clenching his hand ; “I could not trust myself to speak, so I turned on my heel, and here I am !”

“I do believe,” cried Cora, “that this fellow wants to drive us to something that will be an excuse for turning us all out of the house.”

“Then he shall not have his will,” said Lionel ; “but, as soon as the suit is ended, I’ll pay down that money, every farthing of it, and turn my back on Mrs. Madden and her wretched sycophant for ever !”

“But if the suit should be lost !” faltered Lina.

“If the verdict go against us,” exclaimed Lionel desperately, “I care not how soon I am laid six feet under ground !”

“If it go against us, I shall go mad !” muttered Cora.

“If our fortunes be lost, everything is lost !” cried Lina.


Arthur thought, as he hastened away to keep his appointment at Wildwaste, of the aged and bereaved Christian of whom he had heard at the cottage lecture, whose happiness had not rested thus on earth, and therefore could by no earthly losses be destroyed. Her joys and hopes had not been like the flaring torches which consume even in the using, and which the whirlwind of trouble can extinguish for ever; they had been more like the stars in the firmament above, which may be hidden awhile by the clouds, but which the clouds cannot really touch, and which shine out again undimmed in their pure, celestial brightness.

As Arthur pursued his way across the common, his thoughts lingered with his family, from whom even unkindness and insult had not severed his affections. Fervently he desired that each and all might one day experience the power of faith in a heavenly Leader, to supply all the need of souls that instinctively hunger and thirst after happiness, and to sweeten the bitterest waters of earthly disappointment and loss!





CHAPTER XXIII.

HE days which immediately followed, were days of peculiar trial to the Madden family. Cora had not been altogether mistaken in her conjecture ; Sir Thomas not only wished, but had internally resolved, to clear the castle of the troublesome connections of his bride-elect, but the task was a delicate one, and required some tact and management. Mrs. Madden was a great deal too good-natured and kind-hearted, and had too much regard for the world's opinion, to like any strong or violent measures ; nor were such measures suited to the cautious disposition of Sir Thomas himself. He wished no open quarrel with any one, especially with any one who might soon be put into possession of thirty thousand pounds. The uncertainty of the issue of the lawsuit was Sir Thomas's great difficulty in forming his plans. This uncertainty was becoming every day a greater source of torture to the Maddens. Every morning the opening of the post-bag was awaited with feverish impatience, and ever-recurring

disappointment threw its shadow over the rest of each day.

Arthur could not avoid sharing the intense anxiety felt by his brother and sisters ; he had indeed a cause for such anxiety which was peculiar to himself, for he well knew that should the verdict be unfavourable, the ruin of the family would be, rightly or wrongly, laid at his door. The sensitive nature of the young man could hardly have endured the protracted suspense, had not his thoughts been every day necessarily turned into a different channel by his occupations at Wildwaste. Arthur found that relief to his mind in teaching and visiting the poor, in giving instruction and comfort, that his family vainly sought in various kinds of amusement. Arthur in pursuing his labours was forced to think of the trials of others rather than of his own, and when compared with such afflictions as those of Deborah Stone, his troubles seemed easy to be borne.

So passed time with Arthur, chequered with fear and hope, sorrow and joy, till on the next Friday evening he again made one of the little congregation assembled at the cottage meeting.

Arthur happened to be a little late on this occasion. Mr. Eardley was already in his place, and young Madden quietly took the seat which had been left for him, without exchanging a word with any one. Lottie was almost opposite to where he sat, and Arthur, very soon

after the lecture had commenced, was struck by a look of surprise and fear on the little girl's face, as she glanced towards the door. Following the direction of her eyes, Arthur turned on his chair, and saw indistinctly a tall figure, which reminded him of Ford's, standing in the shadow of the doorway, but he could not catch a glimpse of the face. Whether the publican had been drawn thither by curiosity, or by a desire to ingratiate himself with Mr. Eardley, whose influence was great in the neighbourhood, or whether even he had felt some better impulse leading him to return thanks to God for late preservation, neither Arthur nor any one else ever knew. When prayer had followed the lecture, and Arthur rose from his knees to join in the closing hymn, Ford had disappeared from his place.

LECTURE VII.—MOSES AS LAWGIVER.

Before we proceed to consider a transaction most solemn and glorious—God's delivering the Law to Moses amidst the thunders of Sinai—we will for a few minutes pause to reflect on the nature and the necessity of a law for man.

What is sin? It is disobedience to the will of our great Creator and Preserver; it is rebellion against our heavenly King. But how can we know what is His will unless He be pleased Himself to reveal it? Unless God make known to us His commandments, we are too blind even to distinguish the right from the wrong.

It may be said, "Have we not *conscience*, are not its dictates like a Law of God stamped upon our very souls?"

It is so indeed when conscience is enlightened by the Truth which God has revealed in His Word; but without that light, conscience is much like a sun-dial when the darkness of night is around it. To prove this, we have but to turn to heathen tribes who have never possessed a Bible, nor known the commandments of God. We find in many of them that *falsehood* is a habit, *theft* is an instinct, *revenge* is regarded as a virtue; while their dim ideas of religion take the shape of *idolatry*, often stained with *cruelty* and *murder*.

There was then a great necessity that God Himself should teach His creatures the eternal difference between evil and good; that He should declare His will, and have it written down, so that all generations of men should know, reverence, and obey the Law of their heavenly King.

We read that on the first day of the third month after coming forth from Egypt, the Israelites encamped before the Mount of Sinai.* And the Lord called to Moses out

* As there are various opinions as to the exact part of the Red Sea crossed by the children of Israel, so are different views held regarding the precise mountain chosen by the Lord for the solemn delivery of the Law. *Jebel Moosa*, or *the Rock of Moses*, Mount Serbal, and another called *Ras-es-Sufsafeh* (or as the Rev. T. Tyrwhitt spells it, *Sassáfah*), have each been thought of as the possible Mount Sinai, where, from amid clouds and darkness, sounded forth the voice of the Omnipotent God. These typographical questions, though very interesting in themselves, are foreign to the object which the authoress had in view in writing this little volume. She leaves them for the consideration of such of her readers as have the opportunity of searching for themselves the various works in

of the mountain, saying, *Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel. Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto Myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then shall ye be a peculiar treasure to Me, above all people: for the earth is Mine, and ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.*

Moses, charged with this most gracious message, called together the elders of the people, and rehearsed to them the words of the Lord; and all the people answered together and said, *All that the Lord hath spoken we will do.*

This was the solemn *Covenant*, or agreement, between God and the nation of Israel; a promise of peculiar favour on the one side, and of faithful obedience on the other. Man entered readily into this Covenant; but, alas! we shall find that he as readily broke it, and so forfeited his claim to the blessings which God had conditionally promised.

And now Moses was commanded to charge the people which the exact locality of Sinai is made a subject of study. She will only transcribe a striking passage contained in the *New Monthly Magazine*, in reference to the general scenery of the place where God spake to Moses, introducing it by the observation that, "*Horeb embraces the whole range of mountains in that region, while Sinai is applied to the particular mountain peak on which these events occurred.*"

"So great in its wildness is the whole aspect of this region, that a traveller, Sir F. Henneker, tells us that if he had to represent the end of the world he would model it from Mount Sinai." He calls it "a sea of desolation," and adds: "It would seem as if Arabia Petræ had once been an ocean of lava, and that while its waves were literally running mountains high, it was commanded suddenly to stand still." Another traveller remarks that Etna and Vesuvius "are nothing compared with the terrific solitude and bleak majesty of Sinai."

to make solemn preparations for an event unspeakably wondrous and glorious, the descent of the Lord Himself upon the mountain of Sinai, to give His Law to His chosen nation. Bounds were set round the mountain, that none of the people might dare to touch so much as its border: to pass those bounds was *death!* Man, or any other living creature that should transgress them, was to be stoned, or thrust through with a dart.

Then, in the solemn words of Scripture, *it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled. And Mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly.*

Moses was commanded by God to ascend the mountain, and at once obeyed, though weak human nature was almost overpowered by the terrors of such a scene. Moses had boldly withstood the wrath of a tyrant, and the tumult of a multitude; his spirit had been firm in danger; but when the darkened heavens and the heaving earth proclaimed the presence of the eternal God, and the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, from the lips of the trembling mortal burst the confession *I exceedingly fear and quake.*

Oh, my brethren, at this present time, when there is so little of reverence, so little of awe in touching the holiest subjects, when, as the poet forcibly expresses it,

“ Fools rush in where angels dare not tread,”

it is well for us to recall under what circumstances the Ten Commandments were first given to man. We teach the words to our little ones, they are often on our own lips, perhaps carelessly, thoughtlessly uttered ; but let us never forget that they were first heard as spoken by the voice of the Omnipotent God ! THOU SHALT NOT STEAL ! THOU SHALT NOT KILL ! were sounds inexpressibly awful, coming from the darkness of the thick cloud which veiled the majesty of Deity !

Terror seized the multitudes of Israel ; they retreated further back from the smoking mountain, and when Moses descended to them again, they cried out, *Speak thou with us, and we will hear, but let not God speak with us, lest we die.* And Moses said unto the people, *Fear not ; for God is come to prove you, and that His fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not.*

By divine command Moses reared an altar, and on this burnt-offerings and peace-offerings were sacrificed. And Moses wrote down all the words of the Lord, the Ten Commandments and other laws contained in the twentieth and three following chapters of Exodus. A second and a third time the Israelites declared their

assent to the Covenant by the promise, *All that the Lord hath said will we do.* Moses took of the blood of the victims, and sprinkled it on the altar, so *the first Covenant* was sealed with blood.

Then again the Leader of Israel ascended towards the thick darkness which enshrined the Eternal, accompanied, as God permitted, some part of the way by Aaron, two of his sons, and seventy of the elders of Israel. These were privileged to behold such glory as mortal eye had never looked on before, even the glory of the God of Israel. Not indeed form or similitude of the Lord (Deut. iv. 12), but the bright sapphire pavement under His feet, *as it were the body of heaven in its clearness.*

And the Lord said unto Moses, *Come up to Me into the mount, and be there: and I will give thee tables of stone, and a Law, and Commandments which I have written; that thou mayest teach them.*

Moses arose at the command; he took Joshua with him at first, but bade the seventy elders await his return, and appointed Aaron and Hur to conduct any needful business during his absence. Moses and Joshua then ascended higher. For six days Moses awaited in solemn expectation a further revelation of the will of the Almighty. On the seventh day a Voice from the cloud summoned Moses to higher and closer communion with God.

Alone the Leader of Israel trod the awful heights of Sinai and entered that cloud crowned with fiery glory on which the multitudes below gazed up with wondering awe.

Here for forty days and forty nights the man of God remained. He neither tasted nor needed food, supported, as our Saviour was in after days during as long a fast, by the mysterious power of God. But very different was the experience of our Lord from that of Moses. The one driven into the wilderness, the other called up into glory; the one tempted of the devil, the other communing with God!

During these forty most solemn, most blessed days, Moses received minute directions as to making the ark and the altar, the consecration of Aaron and his sons as priests, and the sacrifices which they should offer. It may be well, before we proceed further, for me to say a few words on the subject of what is called the *Ceremonial Law*, which was intended only for the Israelites, and which thus differed from the *Moral Law*, which was intended for all the world.

We may at first be surprised that the Almighty Ruler of heaven should deign to give directions regarding many things belonging to the tabernacle and the worship in it, that we should have deemed beneath the notice of God. But we must keep two things carefully in view when we read of the Ceremonial Law given to Moses. Everything

had a *meaning*, and everything had an *object*. There was a meaning in the robes worn by the priests, as well as in the sacrifices which they offered ; the sweet incense which rose like prayer, the mercy-seat with its cherubim of gold. St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, writes of *the tabernacle and the vessels of the ministry as the patterns of things in the heavens*. *The holy places made with hands* he declares to be *the figures of the true*. This is a very wide subject, into which time will not allow me to enter.

But I must just touch lightly on the *object* of the Ceremonial Law appointed for Israel's observance. This we believe to have been two-fold : Israel was to be separated and kept apart from all other nations, and made the guardians of God's Truth in the midst of a world that was sunk in idolatry. Israel was to be like a garden planted in a wilderness, and many of the commands and prohibitions contained in the Ceremonial Law were as the fences placed round the garden to divide it off, and protect it. When this object had been fulfilled, when our Lord had visited Earth to be a *Light to lighten the Gentiles* as well as *the Glory of His people Israel*, then was the fence of this Ceremonial Law gradually taken away, because no longer required : all the wide world was in course of time to become the garden of the Lord.

The second object of the Ceremonial Law given by

God through Moses, was the teaching of the Gospel to Israel through *types*. This also is a wide and difficult subject, to which I can but briefly allude. I have already spoken to you of the Paschal lamb as a type of the one great Sacrifice for sin; I have tried, however feebly, to show that the deliverance from Egypt, the passage of the Red Sea, the gift of manna from heaven, were all types or pictures of spiritual blessings. So is it with the rites and sacrifices of the Ceremonial Law. They were like a series of *pictures* to teach Israel, in their childhood of ignorance, something of the mysteries of God. The high-priest in his sacred office was a type of the great High-Priest Christ, who should come and by the offering of Himself reconcile sinners to God. The Gospel was preached by Moses in types. Thus the Ceremonial Law was like a scaffolding around a building which is being slowly and gradually raised; when the building is completed, the scaffolding is taken away; while the *Moral Law* is like the rafters deep fixed in the building itself. The *Ceremonial Law* is like the bright petals of a blossom which drop off to make way for the fruit; the *Moral Law* is like the stem which upholds both blossom and fruit. For God is holy—God is good, and therefore the law of holiness and goodness must—like God—endure for ever; while rites and ceremonies are but for a time, and pass away when needed no longer.

The Lord gave unto Moses on Sinai two tables of stone containing the Commandments, of which it is recorded, *the writing was the writing of God, graven upon the tables.* With lowly reverence and joy must the Leader of Israel have received a gift so precious, and hope must have risen in his heart that the people could never transgress laws which had been first uttered by the voice, and then written by the finger of God.

But Moses was to be startled from such hope by an announcement from the Lord himself that at that moment the guilty Israelites were breaking the Covenant of obedience. *Go, get thee down,* said the Lord; *for thy people, whom thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves: they have turned quickly out of the way which I commanded them; and have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed thereunto, and have said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.*

The fearful threat against Israel which followed, and the agonized pleading of Moses for the people, I will defer dwelling on until the time when we consider Moses as the Intercessor. Bearing the sacred tables of stone in his hand, Moses hastened down the mountain, and found the faithful Joshua still awaiting his long-delayed return, though it does not appear from the narrative that any of the seventy elders had had the patience to do so. As

the twain descended towards the plain, loud tumultuous sounds from below struck their ears.

There is a noise of war in the camp! exclaimed the brave Joshua.

Moses knew but too well the source of the tumult. *It is not the voice of them that cry for being overcome: but the noise of them that sing do I hear.*

And now the rapid steps of Moses and his companion brought them within sight of that which filled their souls with generous indignation. *Thou shalt not make unto thyself any graven image*, had sounded from Sinai, was engraved in the tables which Moses bore from its sacred height; but behold—there was a calf of molten gold, and around it in wild unhallowed merriment danced the wretched idolaters whom not all God's mercies, nor God's judgments, could hold in obedience to the Law which they had thrice solemnly vowed to keep. Moses was, as we know, the meekest of men, but his wrath flashed up at the sight, he dashed down the tables of stone; that gift of God, too precious for guilty men, lay broken in pieces at his feet, even as the Covenant of Sinai had been broken by a faithless, idolatrous people. Fearlessly the minister of God then went forward amongst the transgressors. He laid his hand upon the idol which they had worshipped, he cast it into a fire, he ground it to powder, he strewed the golden dust upon water, and made the children of Israel drink it. We



MOSES COMING IN SIGHT OF THE IDOLATERS.

are not told whether resistance was made to these proceedings of Moses; men do not usually see their idols destroyed without a fierce struggle to guard them. The slaughter which immediately followed may have been

a work of stern necessity as well as of just retribution.

Who is on the Lord's side? let him come unto me! cried Moses.

The sons of Levi, his own tribe, boldly rallied around their Leader. They were God's executioners of justice, and sternly they fulfilled their terrible office. There fell of the guilty people on that day about three thousand men. The plague also was sent amongst the Israelites; many times had they provoked a long-suffering God; they had treasured up wrath for the day of wrath, and judgment overtook them at last.

Then spake the Lord again unto Moses, commanding him to lead the people to Canaan, and promising to drive out the heathen nations before them, but with the discouraging addition, *I will not go up in the midst of thee, for thou art a stiff-necked people, lest I consume thee in the way.* The Lord thus threatened to deny the nation that immediate Presence, which had been their safeguard and glory.

Bitter grief and repentance ensued. *When the people heard these evil tidings, they mourned: and no man did put on him his ornaments.* With anxious, sorrowful eyes, they watched their Lawgiver as he entered the tabernacle which he had caused to be removed apart from the camp polluted by guilt. With deep awe they beheld the cloudy pillar descend from its lofty height,

and rest at the entrance of the tabernacle. *All the people rose up and worshipped, every man in his tent door.*

The solemn interview which followed between Moses and his God is full of mystery. It is recorded that *the Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh to his friend.* It may be that the divine Son appeared in visible form, as He had formerly done to Abraham and to Jacob, deigning thus to shroud His glory before the time when, born of a woman, He should wear the veil of human flesh. But what the Lord revealed of Himself only raised a more intense desire in the heart of Moses for higher knowledge—more exalted communion. After most touching and successful pleading for his people, Moses uttered a prayer for himself, such as from one less favoured might have appeared as fearful presumption, *I beseech Thee shew me Thy glory.*

Compassionate love breathed in the answer to the prayer of a mortal to be permitted to gaze on the splendours of Deity. *Thou canst not see My face: for there shall no man see Me and live.* But a gracious promise was added that a measure of glory, such as he could bear, should be revealed to the adoring saint. Moses was commanded to hew two tables of stone, like unto those which he had broken, and with them in his hands again to mount the steeps of Sinai.

Early on the following morning Moses arose, and

ascended the sacred mountain, again to pass there forty days and forty nights without need of food. *And the Lord descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the Name of the Lord: the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and the fourth generation. And Moses made haste, and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshipped.*

Most anxiously must the people have awaited the return of their leader after this his second, long, mysterious absence. At length Moses was seen descending the mountain, carrying the tables on which He had written the Ten Commandments. But the joy of the Israelites at the re-appearance of their great Lawgiver was mingled with terror and surprise. The face of Moses had caught, as it were, the reflection of the ineffable glory of the Holy One with whom he had communed so long; his countenance shone with such unearthly brightness that his own brother Aaron, the chosen high-priest, feared to approach him. Moses was unconscious of his own glory, till the wonder and alarm of the people made him aware of the dazzling brightness with which the Lord's favour had crowned the meekest of men. Never again was such honour con-

ferred on a mortal, till the transfiguration of Him who was not only Man but God. Moses had to place a veil over his face to hide his glory from the dazzled eyes of the people, a veil which he removed when communing with Him from whom that glory was derived. It seems as if to Moses it were granted during his lifetime to anticipate that glorious period when *they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.*

I have already, my friends, passed the usual limits of these short lectures, though I have given but a very slight and imperfect sketch of events which may well form a theme for adoring wonder through the ages of eternity. But I cannot close our review of the covenant, given through Moses to Israel at Horeb, without saying a few words on the better—the *everlasting covenant*—made for us through Jesus Christ our Redeemer.

We have seen that the first covenant, that of *obedience*, was broken by the Israelites, even like the first tables of stone. Instead of a blessing man had inherited a curse; for it is written, *Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.* But Christ, the Mediator of a better covenant, came and took the nature of man, honoured God's holy law by His own perfect obedience, and *redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.* Now,

through faith in His precious blood, sinners receive pardon and mercy; nay, more, they receive the name and the privileges of children of the Lord Almighty. *God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.*

And this inestimable blessing is not confined to one nation, as were the promises made to Israel. Christ died *for the sins of the whole world*; by faith we Gentiles are counted as true Israelites, and heirs of the heavenly promise. But, dearly beloved, we must not stop here. We must not believe that because we are saved through *faith* we have no more need of *obedience*; nay, rather, loving obedience is the necessary fruit of faith. Christ is not only our Saviour, He is our Lawgiver also; as it is written in Isaiah, *The Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King—He will save us.* As Moses wrote again the commandments that were broken, so the Redeemer writes them over again, though not on tables of stone. *This shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel: After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and will write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be My people.*

Yes, my brethren, it is again by the *finger of God* that the holy commandments are written; *not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but*

in fleshy tables of the heart. Have they thus been written in ours? Can we say, with the Psalmist, *Thy law do I love.* It is a law that extends not only to outward acts, but to the inward thoughts of the mind. It is not only sin to *steal*, but sin to *covet*; we are forbidden not only to *murder*, but to *hate*. We must take the commandments in their widest sense as summed up by our great Lawgiver Himself: *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself. Love is the fulfilling of the law.*

But oh, my friends, let us never forget that we—the spiritual Israel—may, like the wanderers in the desert, by unbelief forfeit the blessing. For if with them *every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward*, how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation? I will close our meditations on this solemn theme with the words of St. Paul inspired by the Spirit of God: *Ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which-voice they that heard intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more: but ye are come unto Mount Sion, and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which*

are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling ! See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused Him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape if we turn away from Him that speaketh from heaven !

NOTE.—I have thought it best not to interrupt the course of the narrative by referring to the very remarkable confirmation of the inspired account of the wanderings of Israel, contained in the ancient inscriptions engraven on the rocks around Sinai. I cannot, however, refrain from giving in a note a few extracts from a condensed account of them contained in the fourth number of the "New Monthly Magazine for Sunday-school Teachers."*

"About the year A.D. 518, a merchant of Alexandria, named Cosmos, discovered that upon all the rocks in the neighbourhood of Sinai numerous inscriptions were engraven in an unknown character. Some Jews, travelling with him, ascribed them to the Israelites during the Exode. . . . They consist of letters, hieroglyphics, and figures. . . . Some are on sandstone, some on granite, evidently *all* the work of a *single generation*, though extending for *miles* in countless numbers, and at *almost inaccessible heights*. . . . On one the inscription is in forty-one lines, the top letters being six feet long, the others one foot. . . . In 1820 the Rev. G. F. Gray visited the place, and copied one hundred and seventy-seven. . . . The nature of the country, which has always been desert, proves that these inscriptions, in such immense numbers, large letters, and inaccessible heights, could be only the work of numbers, who must have been provided for miraculously; and thus there is no time, and no people, to whom they can be reasonably assigned except to the Israelites, during their sojourn, when on their flight from Egypt, for forty years, when they were fed and supported by God. . . . The evidence thus given to the truth of the miracles and history of the Pentateuch is at the present day most valuable and important."

* Published by the Sunday School Institute, 74 Ludgate Hill.

The learned have devoted time and study to making out the meaning of these interesting ancient inscriptions. I will give another extract from the paper above referred to, which will show how wonderfully their contents bear on the history of wandering Israel.

"Many of the inscriptions begin with 'T,' 'the people,' sometimes the people of the tribes, or of the Hebrews, and end with 'ISI,' the ineffable name Jehovah. We subjoin one or two examples:—

"*Drawing of a stone.*—'At Meribah the people the hard stone satiates with water, thirsting.'

"Also another drawing of *figure of a man, with uplifted hands, on a great stone.*—'Prayeth unto God the prophet, upon a hard great stone, his hands sustaining Aaron Hur' Another, 'The eloquent speaker strikes with a stick the great rock, flows forth the water falling from above.' Also, 'The people Moses provoketh to anger, kicking like an ass at the water-springs: wanting, the people railleth against Jehovah, crying out.'

"*Drawing of a serpent descending on a prostrate victim.*—'Destroy, springing on the people, the fiery serpents, hissing, injecting venom, heralds of death, they kill the people, prostrating on their backs, circling in folds they wind round, descending on, bearing destruction.' . . . 'The people sustain on a pole, erecting a standard, the male serpent fiery of molten brass; the people look towards the fire; sought by an evil thing, offer up vows the tribes the Hebrews.'"


P.S.—While this work was in the press, a most interesting work, "STONES CRYING OUT," by a sister Authoress, came into my hands. I strongly recommend its perusal to my readers.





CHAPTER XXIV.

REFLECTED RADIANCE.

HE subject of the preceding lecture had been too deep for the younger hearers ; and as Arthur watched his young class as they rather noisily departed, he turned over in his mind how he could make the lessons of Sinai more simple to his rustic pupils. He proposed to teach them the Ten Commandments, explaining each of them as he did so, and enforcing their authority by recalling to the boys the solemn scene on the mountain of Sinai, the description of which, more than any other part of the lecture, had fixed their attention. The office of feeding the lambs requires much thought out of school time, as well as patient effort during the hours given to teaching.

“After all,” reflected Arthur, “it is God alone who can write the law in the heart ; we can but trace it in the memory. It is strange to think of each child as bearing within him a tablet, upon which the Spirit of

good or the spirit of evil will deeply impress that on which life or death must depend. How striking, in reference to this, is St. Paul's description of a believer as an *epistle of Christ*—the tracing of the finger of God within made legible to all in the outer life! Would that it were thus with me! But how deeply do selfishness, worldliness, and pride leave their blotted lines on the heart, so that we should blush if even our nearest and dearest friends could read what is written within!"

Those "blotted lines," as regarded the other inmates of the castle, were becoming legible enough even to the most casual observer. In a time of excitement the usual restraints on behaviour are often cast aside, as a cumbersome robe in the heat of a struggle. It was such a time of excitement with the Maddens. The Saturday's post brought stirring news. Samuel Green had been unable to come from Australia to give personal evidence in court; but a written statement of his, properly attested by witnesses, had arrived, and had been produced at the sitting on Friday, being the only link wanting to complete the chain of evidence required.

But this important document was by no means all that the Maddens had expected or desired. Samuel Green, while bearing emphatic witness to his late master's shrewdness in all matters of business, as distinctly certified as to his monomania on the subject of

the marriage of his nephew. This was in one way a relief to Arthur, for reasons which the reader will understand; but it increased to a degree of painful intensity the anxiety of the Madden family as to the issue of the case. Not that they had any good reason to despair of success; their cause was in most able hands, and the nature of the coming verdict was exceedingly doubtful. But now the case for the plaintiff was closed; the protracted business was at length being wound up; on Monday or Tuesday, as Mr. Barker wrote, the long-looked-for verdict would be given. Neither Lionel nor his sisters could await that verdict with tolerable composure. They met each morning haggard from a night passed in sleeplessness, or troubled with dreams of lawyers, lost suits, and ruin! There was one constant topic of conversation, one perpetual theme for discussion amongst them, only varied by the bitter overflowing current of dislike and contempt for Sir Thomas and his elect bride. The placid cheerfulness of Mrs. Madden, and the daily increasing assumption of authority on the part of the knight, were sources of great irritation to the lady's step-children. The hours spent by the engaged pair together in the study were always supposed to be employed in concocting schemes against the family of Mrs. Madden's first husband. Even the riband of brilliant cerise, which now replaced Mrs. Madden's black one, was bitterly commented on by Cora and Lina; and

the orders to dressmaker and milliner, which the bride talked over with serene unconsciousness of the annoyance which the topic gave to her hearers, were regarded as actual cause of offence. The Maddens could hardly put a decent restraint upon the expression of their feelings, even though aware that to insult the woman whose hospitality sustained them would be like the act of the fool who tried to hack from the tree the branch on which he was seated.

Lionel was in a fever of impatience to go to London, with an unfounded, and yet not unnatural idea, that matters would be likely to progress more favourably if he were on the spot of action. But he would not again expose himself to the indignity of being refused a loan. Therefore, chafing like a caged tiger, he was forced to remain at the castle. The weather, which had become extremely wet and ungenial, by entirely confining the ladies to the house, increased the weariness of expectation: it shut out visitors and prevented visits, and threw on their own resources those who, in their restless suspense, had "no heart to settle to anything!"

Sunday came, the first day of that week which would be so eventful to the Maddens. How would it close on the anxious litigants? To most of them Sunday came as no day of holy repose. The fitful gusts of wind that stripped the trees of their quivering foliage, and the pattering rain that beat on the castle windows, seemed

emblematic of the state of mind of some of the inmates of the stately mansion. The great event of the day was the opening of the letter-bag. The key of this was kept by Mrs. Madden, and to the great annoyance of her step-children she came down-stairs later than usual. At length the rustle of her rich silk was heard, and the lady's rosy, complacent face appeared in the room where the Maddens had been anxiously awaiting her coming. Even then their step-mother seemed to be in no haste to gratify their eagerness. Cora and Lina could hardly restrain an outburst of impatience as she stood with the little key of the bag in her hand, first deliberately giving some orders to the servant, then discoursing with Sir Thomas on the best remedy for a slight cough with which he was troubled—a subject more interesting to her than it was to the Maddens. Lina longed to snatch the key from that plump, jewelled hand.

At last the bag was opened; the presence of Sir Thomas prevented the eager foray which would otherwise have been made on its contents. Mrs. Madden slowly and deliberately drew out letter after letter, read her own name on the envelope, and guessed the probable writer.

“Is there nothing for me?” cried Lionel impatiently.

“Ah, yes; the usual letter from the lawyer. How well one knows his crabbed hand!” And as Lionel tore the note open, and Cora and Lina seized on the copy of

the *Times* which was next drawn forth, Mrs. Madden turned smiling to Arthur with the words, "Here's a foreign post-letter for you. Your uncle must have written at last."

Lina glanced up eagerly even from the report of proceedings in the case of *Verner v. Madden*, to read the contents of that letter in the face of her favourite brother. There was so little change in the calm, pensive expression of his countenance, that Lina felt uncertain whether the epistle had given pleasure or pain. Arthur saw the question expressed in her eager eyes, and handed the open letter to his sister, with the simple remark, "You will see that my uncle can do nothing to further my plans."

Though Arthur preserved a calm demeanour, the downfall of his hopes inflicted on him a keen pang of disappointment. It was his earnest desire by strenuous efforts to reach a position that would enable him to support not only himself, but his sisters, should Edward Verner gain his suit; and now this hope seemed to be crumbling away beneath him. It did not make the trial more endurable to have to listen through the whole of breakfast time to Sir Thomas's pompously expressed opinion as to the relative advantages offered by a clerk's position, and that of an appointment in the police. "Competitive examinations," as Sir Thomas remarked with the air of a Solon, "involve certain expense with an uncertain prospect of success." It was evident that

the knight was inclined to be as careful a guardian of Mrs. Madden's property as he had always been of his own, and that he never lost sight of the future interests of his five promising sons.

Arthur was the only member of the circle who attended at church on that Sunday. The weather formed a sufficient excuse for the ladies, and Lionel never considered any excuse needful for absence on his part. Lina deeply sympathized with Arthur, as she watched him from the window setting out on his long lonely walk, with his burden of disappointment, anxiety, and care. And yet never during the course of his life had Arthur been less an object for compassion than he was on that Sabbath-day, when he knelt in the house of prayer. There are periods in the experience of most earnest Christians, and these often periods of trial, when the sense of God's presence and of God's love is so intensely realized, that the tried one can rest in *the everlasting arms* with the peaceful security, the blissful trust of a child on its mother's bosom. This feeling of deep, mysterious happiness, a foretaste of that of heaven, is the joy which is spoken of by St. Paul as one of the fruits of the Spirit. It was this which was experienced by the pious Sir Philip Sydney, when, dying in the prime of his manhood a painful and lingering death, he exclaimed, "I would not change my joy for the empire of the world!"

But as in the inspired description of the fruits of the Spirit, *joy* is placed immediately after *love*, so is there a close connection between these two celestial gifts. There may be in religion much love without much joy, but as regards spiritual emotions, we are not likely to experience much joy without much love. The bulk of so-called Christians, like the seventy elders on Sinai, go but a little way up the mountain; and though they see something of the glory of their Creator, it is, as it were, but the sapphire pavement under His feet. There is still the veil of thick clouds and darkness to separate them from His presence. It is the more loving, the more devoted, that alone are called to come up higher, like Moses, and find in deep sweet communion with God a peace that passeth understanding. From these blissful heights such can calmly look down on earth's sorrow and gloom, the dearth of human sources of comfort more than supplied by heavenly joy. We may well envy the blessed servant of God as he worships on the mountain, and reserve our pity for the poor worldlings below, pursuing their brief revels around the golden calf, the idol of Mammon, which they have set up to be their future shame and destruction!

Arthur was enabled on that day so fully to cast his cares on his God, to feel such sweet confidence in the love which would guide him through the difficulties thickening around him, that the only real cloud on his

sky was his sorrow that not one of his family shared, or could even understand, the solid comforts of religion. It was sad to stand alone, even in joy; to know that distrust, fear, covetousness, hatred, and malice, like spirits of evil, were tormenting the hearts of those for whom on earth he cared most. Arthur's spirit especially yearned over Lina, his darling; he would have shed the last drop of his life's blood for the assurance that she had given her heart, with its warm fervent affections, to her Lord. Each passing day now made her brother more painfully aware that a gulf was widening between him and his sister; that Lina was lingering in Egypt still, though unconscious herself that such was the case. But even for this trouble of the soul Arthur found solace in prayer, fervently commending to God both the temporal and eternal interests of each one bound to him by the tie of blood.

It has been beautifully remarked that every face, according as it is more or less turned towards our Sun, must reflect a portion of His brightness. When Arthur returned from church there was a serene happiness expressed in his manner, that strikingly contrasted with the peevish restlessness and fretfulness of those whose thoughts had not risen above earth. Lionel had been knocking about balls with his cue, under the name of practising billiards; Lina yawning over her prayer-book; Cora looking out the dresses which she wished to take

to London, for she had made up her mind to a speedy journey thither, "when the odious law-suit should be all happily settled." Arthur was the only one of the younger Maddens who did not look weary and out of spirits and temper. Lina thought that she had never before seen her brother's eyes so bright, or his manner more full of that gentle courtesy to all around, which is the natural outward expression of a spirit perfectly at rest.


"I thought that Arthur would have been so worried by that letter," said Lina to Cora, as they adjourned to the drawing-room together, Mrs. Madden and Sir Thomas having as usual retired to the study; "but he seems as if he had some spring of pleasant thought that makes it impossible to put him out of humour. He endured, and quite cheerfully too, Mrs. Madden's intolerable discussion about wedding-cards and fancy envelopes, and Sir Thomas's more intolerable prosing about the prodigies performed by his boys!"

"Arthur has clearly quite made up his mind to success in the suit," said Cora; "and the idea of soon having thirty thousand pounds of his own puts him into such spirits. I wonder that he makes so sure—he is the last one of us that ought to do so, seeing that he, at least, has tried all the means in his power to prevent our having our rights!"



CHAPTER XXV.

AN UNCONSCIOUS WARNING.

 HERE was no country post on Monday, but that on the Tuesday morning was anticipated with interest most intense. Even Mrs. Madden betrayed a little excitement of expectation when she opened the bag. Cora's fingers trembled as she tore open the *Times*, and Lina was so confused that she could hardly take in the meaning of the words before her eyes. Lionel had again a letter from the lawyer, or he would hardly have left the paper to his sisters.

"There's a long, long speech from Mr. Barker—"

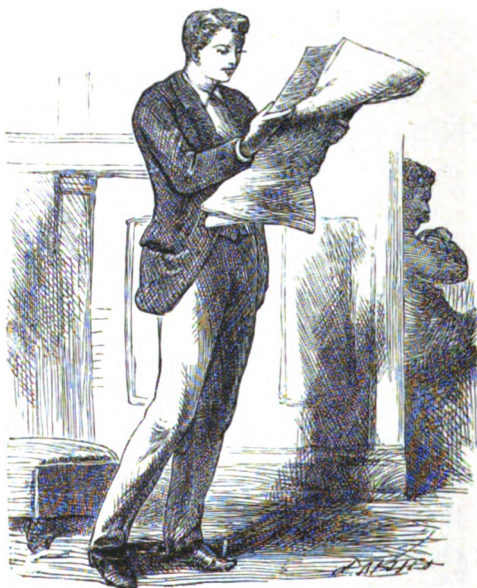
"But the end—the end!" cried the eager, excited Lina; "oh, here it is—*judgment adjourned!* We shall have to wait another wretched day in suspense!" she exclaimed, flinging herself down on a chair with the fretful impatience of a spoiled child.

"No, not a whole day; Barker writes that he will telegraph the verdict," said Lionel, hoarse with excite-

ment; "give me the paper," he added, taking the *Times* roughly from Cora, who had been absorbed in the speech for the defence, while Lina looked over her shoulder.

"Let's hear it—let's hear the speeches," said Sir Thomas; "we all are interested in the case."

Arthur volunteered to read aloud for the benefit of



READING THE SPEECHES.

all, and Lionel sulkily and unwillingly resigned the paper into his hands. Arthur went through the eloquent speech of the counsel for the defence with energy

and spirit, his reading occasionally interrupted by exclamations of admiration and approval from his listeners. None of the younger Maddens could touch the breakfast before them till the reading was concluded; but Sir Thomas and his lady gave good proof, had any one been at leisure to notice them, that their interest in the case of *Verner v. Madden* was not sufficient to destroy their appetites.

Mr. Barker's speech was so clever, so well calculated to impress upon all who heard him that old Isaac Verner had possessed the wisdom of a Burleigh, and that he had made the most natural and right disposition of his property in leaving it to his young relatives, that before Arthur had finished reading, the spirits of his family had risen to the point of triumphant confidence. All was sure to go well, and the young ladies fell again into their favourite occupation of laying plans for the expenditure of the money which they expected so soon to possess.

Arthur had borne anxiety calmly and cheerfully, but he could not resist the contagion of hope. His disposition was anything rather than ascetic, and self-indulgence had been his besetting sin. The prospect of hearing before the close of the day, that—instead of a severe struggle with poverty, with all the hardships, toils, and humiliations which poverty would bring—he was the possessor of independence and wealth, seemed

to flash upon him with the pleasure of surprise. Arthur had been so long schooling himself to disappointment, that the rebound into hope was exhilarating, and he could not resist the impulse to let himself be borne away by it.

"O Arthur, you must come this morning and let us have a gallop together!" exclaimed Lina. "See how gloriously the sun has burst through the clouds—we have not had such a bright gleam for many a day; it is a good omen of our success! Just let me ring and tell John to saddle your good black steed!"

"You would have me gallop off and leave my expectant class, wondering what had become of their teacher," said Arthur, who felt a strong inclination himself to mount and away.

"You cannot be expected to go every day to such work, plodding round and round, like a horse in a mill!" cried Lina. "You have of late given all your mornings to the drudgery of teaching—this I claim as my own—I am sure that in the afternoon it will rain."

"Nay, nay, my wee thing," said Arthur, smiling and shaking his head, "I must spur on my scholars instead of my steed; for if I give the rein to Black Prince to-day, they may give the rein to self-will to-morrow, and follow the example of their teacher by running away from duty. I must be off—I am half an hour beyond time!"

But though Arthur resisted the temptation of a joyous

ride with his favourite sister on that sunny October morning, and resolutely turned his face towards Wild-waste, he found it more difficult to turn his excited mind to the work before him. His thoughts were full of the expected telegram, and the good news that it might bring, and as he walked over the common in the sunshine, Arthur found himself building castles in the air, instead of mentally preparing himself for the lessons of the day.

“Yes, I’ll have a pretty school-house built on the site of the ‘Jolly Gardener,’ and Mr. Eardley will find some one to take the young rustics in hand. Shall I have to wait for this till I come of age, or will the executors advance me the money? At all events I must manage to pass the winter with Lina in Italy, and the early spring in Palestine, and then—”

The sound and sight of a fierce scuffle in front of Bolder’s shed, to which Arthur was approaching, startled him out of his day-dream. He hurried forward, and his morning’s duties commenced by his putting a stop to a fight between two of his pupils, who, tired of waiting for their teacher, had beguiled the time by attacking each other with the fury of bull-dogs.

It was with difficulty that Arthur kept his attention that day to the wearisome routine of elementary teaching: the time seemed to pass very slowly, and the pupils to be more than usually dull. The noise as

well as the blunders which they made, so annoyed Arthur, that he could hardly keep his temper. This was, however, only until he entered on the religious part of the instruction, with which he always closed the work of the morning. Arthur felt this part of his teaching the most important and the most interesting both to himself and his pupils. He had to translate, as it were, into such simple language as ignorant children could understand, some of the lessons contained in Mr. Eardley's lectures. Arthur questioned his boys to make sure that their minds had grasped the meaning of what had been taught. Engaged in this occupation, Arthur forgot for a while all about the law-suit and its expected results, till the subject was recalled to him by the answer of one of the boys to a question.

"What is it to *covet*?" asked Arthur of Gideon, as in the course of his teaching the tenth commandment came under review.

The boy raised his heavy eyes to his teacher's face, and slowly replied, "'Tis to want summat that one don't ought to get."

The rough touch of that rustic had burst in a moment the glittering bubble of sophistry which the eloquent lawyer had blown. Arthur felt self-convicted before his pupil of breaking the very law which he had been teaching; for let man's ingenuity clothe the bare fact as it might, Arthur's conviction returned that Isaac Verner

had done in madness what in his sober senses he would never have done,—set aside the declared intentions of his father, and cruelly disinherited the nephew whom he loved. Arthur saw how heavily his own wishes had weighed in the balance against what would have been the verdict of his unbiased judgment had the case not involved his own interest, and reproached himself for the eagerness with which he had so lately built his hopes on the expected and desired poverty and ruin of another.

“There is more danger than I had imagined of worshipping the golden calf in the secret depths of the soul, even when one’s outward conduct is a protest against such worship,” was the young man’s reflection as he wended his homeward way. “The Law of God is perfect indeed, reaching even to the thoughts of the heart.”

While Arthur’s conscience was thus detecting evil in the bud, in the breast of another the poisonous plant of covetousness was ripening into the fruit of crime. As the great bell of the factory was ringing out at noonday the welcome signal to the workmen within for their hour’s pause from labour, Ford stood near the door, watching the stream of rough “hands” as they issued forth to disperse to their various homes. Ford had recovered from the effect of the personal injuries received on the night of the fire, but he had met with little success in his efforts to replace the value of property

lost. He was still a ruined man, and fierce disappointment was making him reckless. As Abner Stone emerged through the doorway, Ford caught the eye of the man over whom he exercised a powerful influence, and beckoned to him to join him. The two walked together in the direction of the Black Bear, the public-house which stood about half a mile from Wildwaste, on the opposite side from the castle. Ford preserved silence till the last cottage of the hamlet was passed, and he and his companion were treading the road bordered on either side by a tract of common so bare that they were certain of not being overheard by any unseen listener.

"I say," began Ford, in a low tone, glancing to the right and left ere he spoke, "I hear that the agent for the great firm will be riding from Portley after dark, and riding alone."

"Ey?" said Abner carelessly: he either did not understand the drift of the observation, or did not choose to seem to do so.

"He'll have his saddle-bags full of gold, and his pocket-book full of bank-notes," pursued Ford; "and he rides *alone*," he repeated, laying an emphasis on the last word.

"More fool he," said Abner Stone, "seeing there's not a house but Thomson's 'twixt the Black Bear and Portley, and it's a wild part of the country, it is, and—" he

looked up into the clouds which had gathered since the morning, "it's likely to be a wild night."

Not another word was spoken for some seconds, then Ford observed, "It's uphill work for you, Abner Stone, to have to keep a wife and family afloat; you've a life of labour while strength lasts, and nothing to look to in age but the Union. There be some fellows of spirit who'd rather take a short cut to ease and plenty, and don't think the chance of a prison much more to be feared than that of a workhouse. I'm one of these fellows myself, and—"

But why should I give a detailed account of a colloquy between tempter and tempted, at which the Spirit of Evil himself might have made a third. Ford made use of his keener wit and deeper knowledge of evil, to draw down into darker depths of sin the man whose depraved habits might make him a ready, and whose physical strength a useful, tool. All was arranged between them: they were to meet and waylay on the high-road the agent of a large house of business, who was known to be likely to travel that night with a considerable sum on his person.

"We must not be seen together this evening," said Ford to his accomplice; "our meeting-place shall be the three poplars which stand at the turn of the road beyond the Black Bear; there's not a dwelling there within sight."

Abner Stone nodded his head; he knew well the wild desolate spot, and could see to the left, across the moor, the tops of the three trees that formed a landmark in that bare level tract of country.

"I'll keep to the road to-night," continued Ford, turning back to return on his steps to Wildwaste hamlet, "for you," he added with covert scorn, "could hardly pass the Black Bear without stopping. You'll take the short cut across the heath."

"No short cuts for me at night—and in this weather," said Abner doggedly; "I've not forgotten how we had to dig the corpse of John Styles out of the bog last winter."

"Tut, he'd been drunk, or he'd never have been lost," observed Ford.

"Drunk or sober, I'll not take that path," said Abner.

"Have it as you will, so that you don't fail me," cried Ford; "I don't care for the chance of being seen passing the Black Bear at that hour, and shall prefer the common to the highway."

The men, as we have seen, had not continued their walk towards the lonely public-house, but had turned back, to take their dinner, as they usually did, in Deborah's cottage. They found her preparing the meal. Lottie and Gideon were seated on the floor in their favourite corner. They had been conversing on what the boy had heard that day in the class, and his sister

from "Mrs. 'Oldit," and trying which could best recollect the Commandments which both had been learning since the last lecture, repeating them alternately the one to the other. They had reached the Sixth Commandment when, silent and gloomy, the two men were just about to enter through the open door, and Ford stopped—as if strangely arrested by the words uttered in Gideon's slow deliberate tone, *Thou shalt not steal!*

"No; it is *Thou shalt do no murder!*" said Lottie, who then stopped suddenly, terrified at finding that she had been overheard by her father and Ford, and dreading the blow that might follow.


Neither of the men, however, appeared to take notice of what they had heard. Ford walked up to the fire, as if he felt chilly, and gazed sternly and gloomily into its glowing depths. Perhaps at that moment—for hardened sinners may have such moments—slumbering conscience had been roused by the words from the lips of a little one, like the warning of a guardian spirit; perhaps Ford was recalling what he had heard in the cottage of Holdich, "We teach those words to our children, . . . but let us never forget that they were first uttered by the voice of the Omnipotent God. *Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not kill*, were sounds unutterably awful, coming from the darkness of the thick cloud which veiled the Majesty of Heaven."

Was the warning regarded?



CHAPTER XXVI.

UNWELCOME TRUTH.

ARTHUR did not attempt to study on that day, he gave the afternoon to his sisters, seeking to lighten for them the tediousness of long hours of suspense and expectation. The day which had begun in sunshine had darkened into mist and rain, and the wild spirits of the excited girls had suffered a corresponding damp. Arthur assisted Cora in arranging her collection of dried flowers and drawings, in preparation, as she said, for a journey to London on the following day. Arthur made the occupation more cheerful by amusing conversation, his anecdotes following one another in lively succession like sparkling links on a chain. He took down his flute from the shelf on which it had lain silent for weeks, and persuaded Lina to accompany him on the piano. She found pleasure in the music, though after every piece she would start up and run to the

window, to see if any one were in sight who might be the bearer of a telegram.

When twilight began to darken, Cora went to her own room to make out a list of friends to whom she should "write off the news" as soon as it should reach her. Lina followed her to the door and whispered, "Has not Arthur been delightful to-day?"

"Better at any rate than Lionel, who says that he has a racking headache, and makes it an excuse for snapping like a mad dog at any one who chances to speak a word to him. No one would be more pleasant than Arthur if it were not for his strange notions about religion."

Cora did not choose to perceive that it was these very "notions" that made her younger brother lay aside the remembrance of many a bitter look and taunt, and treat a sister who had been consistently unkind, with the same gentle consideration as if she had won a personal claim to his affection.

"I cannot think what delays the telegram!" exclaimed Lina with a weary sigh, as she seated herself at her brother's feet on a footstool close to the window which commanded a view of the avenue. "This cruel suspense makes one so intensely anxious! I long—yet almost dread to know the verdict!"

"Ah, Lina!" said Arthur very gently, as he laid his hand on the small clasped ones which his sister had

rested on his knee, "do you not think that those who have been given hopes of a better inheritance may afford not to be anxious—not *so very anxious* regarding this?" Arthur feared the effect upon his sister's excitable mind, should the news so eagerly awaited bring disappointment at last.

"How can one help being anxious?" cried Lina.

"Are we not commanded, dearest, to *take no thought for the morrow*"?

"It is a command which I cannot obey," said Lina.

"Does God ever give a command without giving power to obey it to those who seek and ask for His strength to do so?"

"It is not that I care for poverty," said Lina quickly; "I have no love of money, I could be happy anywhere—if with you—but the idea of dependence upon the charity of a man whom I hate!"

"Lina, Lina," expostulated her brother, "why thus foster bitter angry feelings, which can only disturb your peace, and which, as opposed to God's Law of Love, cannot be pleasing in His sight! I have often thought of speaking to you on this subject. It pains me to see my gentle sister carried away by the stormy current of dislike for those who really have done us no wrong."

"I do not care to disguise my feelings," said Lina proudly, withdrawing her hands from Arthur's.

"But should you not seek to bring these feelings

themselves under control? You would not wish to be ungenerous nor unjust, Lina, and prejudice tends to make us both. But to seek no other reason—we cannot nourish hatred in our hearts without breaking the express command of One who has every claim to our obedience.”

“I tell you that there are some laws which I cannot obey,” said Lina.

“And do you think that you can safely set them aside, because you find difficulty in keeping them?”

“You have such slavish ideas of duty!” cried Lina; “yet you know, Arthur—no one knows better than you do—that we are saved by faith, not by obedience.” This was an argument which Lina had found more effectual than any other, in stifling any reproach of conscience.

Arthur was silent for a few moments ere he replied, “True, Lina, it is not our obedience that saves us, any more than it was the obedience of the Israelites that brought them out of Egypt, opened a path through the sea, and strewed the desert with manna. Yet was wilful disobedience sufficient to shut out from the Promised Land those who had been redeemed by miracle, and fed with the bread of angels.”

A flush mounted to Lina’s cheek; she slowly rose from her seat, and looked full into the face of her brother as she said, “I suppose that you in your Christian love

and charity, are taking fears and anxieties concerning my welfare, because I am no hypocrite, but say what I think, and cannot make my conduct square with your strict ideas of right and wrong."

"Not my ideas, Lina, not mine," said her brother earnestly, rising as he spoke; "no human standard can be a safe one; it is the Bible that holds that Law which God Himself has given—by that Law must we be guided here, for by that Law shall we be judged hereafter. Oh, Lina, we must not deceive ourselves; they only receive Christ as their Saviour, who seek to obey Him as their Lawgiver also."

Often had Arthur proposed thus to open his heart to his sister, as oft had he shrunk from uttering what might give pain, and perhaps offence. Now the words had burst unpremeditated from his lips, and he almost wished that he could recall them, when he saw hot tears gathering in his sister's blue eyes, and heard the bitter tone of her reply.

"I thank you for your sermon, Arthur; you have taught me something to-day; you have taught me that you are a great deal more clear-sighted than I supposed as to the faults and the dangers of others: and if such be your way of showing affection, it is a very different kind of affection from mine!" and with a burst of passionate anger and grief Lina suddenly rushed from the room, evading her brother's attempts to recall her;

and burying herself in a part of the castle to which she knew that she would not be followed, the young girl wept alone.

Arthur returned to his seat by the window with an acute sensation of pain. He had hurt and offended the sister whom he loved ; he had hazarded alienating from himself that affection which was his dearest possession upon earth. He felt inclined to accuse himself of unkindness, of injustice towards his favourite sister. And yet, what had he done ? He had but uttered a simple truth obvious to any *sincere* Christian who believes that He who said *Come unto Me*, has also said *Follow Me*. Lina was one of thousands who form a standard of duty for themselves, shaped out by inclination, with very little reference to that holy Law which Christ came not to destroy but to fulfil. Her whole views on religion were vague, and she did not attempt or wish to make them more clear. The young girl was intensely mortified to find that the partiality of her darling brother did not render him blind to her faults. She was not to him the saint surrounded with a halo, the idol raised on a throne ; she was a weak, imperfect girl, tempted to malice, hatred, and all uncharitableness. Lina, a spoiled child from the cradle, could not recognize affection in the form of reproof, nor believe that human love, like that which is divine, can embrace its object with deepest tenderness when it warns, or even corrects.


"I had intended to give up the lecture this evening," said Arthur to himself, as he gazed sadly forth on the darkening scene before him; "but I think that I shall go after all. I do not wish my next meeting with Lina to be at the dinner-table, and as for the expected telegram, I can run the chance of hearing it a few minutes later than the rest of the family. If it bring painful tidings, there is more need that I should strengthen myself for them by quiet devotion. Hark! is that the rumble of wheels? No; it is but the growl of distant thunder. There will be a storm to-night; but few will meet at the cottage—I will not be one of the absent. Oh, Lina, mine own sweet sister, you never would doubt me again if you knew how fervently, how fondly you will this evening be remembered in the prayers of your brother!"





CHAPTER XXVII.

LECTURE VIII.—MOSES AS INTERCESSOR.

 **T**HERE is a sublime grandeur in the form of Moses as we behold him holding forth his rod over the billowy sea, or raising that rod towards heaven; for the stormy tempest and the rolling waters obeyed the Leader who was invested with power by that God who had made the sea, and stretched out the firmament on high! There is more than human majesty in the appearance of Moses when we behold the great Lawgiver descending from Sinai, bearing aloft those holy Commandments, which not a nation alone, but a world should obey, his countenance radiant with such glory as never before had beamed from the face of mortal man!

But though Moses was mighty as the Leader, illustrious as the Lawgiver, it is with more of interest and admiration that we view him as the Intercessor for Israel! Power excites wonder,—holiness, awe; but it is love that attracts the soul. It was in his compassionate, long-suffering love

that we especially see in the character of this servant of God a faint reflection of His who not only loved, but *Himself is Love!*

The fearful sin of the Israelites in worshipping the golden calf had, as we have seen, justly aroused the anger of God. *Let Me alone*, were the awful words heard by Moses on the Mount of Sinai, *that My wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation.*

But no pride or selfish ambition in the breast of the Leader of Israel made him endure the thought of rising on the ruin of his people, sinful and ungrateful as they had been. Thrice he besought the Lord with fervent entreaties to spare transgressing Israel. Who can measure the strength of the love which forced from the lips of the Prophet such words as these:—*Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if Thou wilt forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of Thy book!* We seem to see before us the Leader prostrate in the presence of God, wrestling in that intense agony of entreaty which can take no denial, scarce measuring or understanding the meaning of his own prayer; only anxious that that fervent prayer should prevail to stay the sword uplifted to destroy! It is thus that an almost despairing mother might plead for the life or the soul of her perishing child! Such a prayer God answers in mercy.

More than eleven months were passed by the Israelites at the foot of Sinai, a period crowded with events of solemn importance. The Law was received, the tabernacle made, the priests consecrated, the rites and ceremonies of the Church of Israel instituted. At length, on the twentieth day of the second month of the second year after the Exodus from Egypt, the guiding pillar of cloud was raised from off the tabernacle, and the people arose, struck their tents, and followed; leaving the plains, which had lately resounded with the hum of busy multitudes, to the deep solitude and silence which, ere their coming, had brooded over the desert.

Rise up, Lord, and let Thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate Thee flee before Thee! cried Moses, when the Ark moved onward; and when it rested, he said, *Return, O Lord, unto the many thousands of Israel!*

We find the Leader at Taberah again pleading for his erring people, and by his prayers quenching the fire from the Lord. The multitudes became weary of the manna with which, night by night, a God of mercy supplied their need. They who had so lately been a degraded nation of slaves, pined for the sensual enjoyments of the land of bondage, as those who have only the name of Christians now, turn back longing eyes towards forbidden pleasures! The people wept in their tents. *Who shall give us flesh to eat?* they cried; *we remember the*

fish which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks. But now our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all besides this manna before our eyes!

So rose the cry of bitter discontent; the anger of the Lord was kindled, and the heart of Moses sank within



MOSES PRAYING.

him. Worn out at last by the repeated murmurs of an ungrateful nation, the Leader found life itself but a burden, and poured out the bitterness of his soul to his God in language that breathed more of anguish than of

submission : *I am not able to bear all this people alone, because it is too heavy for me. And if Thou deal thus with me, kill me, I pray Thee, out of hand, if I have found favour in Thy sight; and let me not see my wretchedness!*

Divine compassion would not grant a prayer so hastily uttered; God answered it according to His mercy with a promise of abundance of flesh to the people, and a gracious command to Moses to choose out seventy elders to help him to bear the burden which was weighing him down to the dust. And the Lord sent His Spirit on the seventy elders to fit them for their responsible office: the greater number of them prophesied in the Tabernacle, but two of them, named Eldad and Medad, spoke aloud in the camp. Tidings of this were hastily brought to Moses, and the irregularity of thus addressing the people seems to have startled the faithful Joshua, who, jealous for the honour of his master, thought that these two men were presumptuously encroaching on what was the peculiar office of the Leader. "My lord Moses, forbid them!" he cried.

But Moses, in the spirit of true humility, rejoiced that others were partakers of the honour conferred on himself. We cannot detect the slightest taint of jealous pride in his unselfish, generous soul. "Enviest thou for my sake?" answered Moses. "Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would

put His Spirit upon them!" God was glorified, the multitudes instructed, and Moses was thankful.

At Hazeroth we again find Moses a humble Intercessor with God, and under circumstances which give a peculiar interest to the account of his prayer. We have seen how his spirit was perpetually tried by the rebellious, repining spirit of his people, but here the trial came closer to him still; those who spake against him were those of his own kindred, bound to him by the ties of blood, those from whom he might well have expected sympathy and support. Aaron and Miriam, not content with the honourable position to which they had been raised—one as the high-priest, the other as the prophetess of Israel—appear to have had their jealousy roused by seeing their brother preferred before them. "Hath the Lord indeed spoken only by Moses?" they said; "hath He not also spoken by us?"

Malice itself could not accuse Moses of selfishness, injustice, or pride; Aaron and Miriam seem to have laid hold on the only point in the conduct of their noble brother which might serve to lower his popularity and influence,—his having married a daughter of Midian. They spake against him because of Zipporah, his wife. This was to wound Moses in his feelings as a husband as well as a leader.

Never did Moses show more of the meek spirit of Him who, when he was reviled, reviled not again, than upon

this trying occasion. He appears humbly and silently to have left his cause to God, and the Almighty upheld before all the people the honour of His insulted servant. The Lord came down in the pillar of the cloud, and called forth Aaron and Miriam, openly declared to them the higher privileges of their brother, speaking of him as *My servant Moses. . . . who is faithful in all Mine house*; and closed His testimony to the favour in which He held His chosen saint, with a stern rebuke to those who envied him: *Wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against My servant Moses?* Thus he who had humbled himself, was by God highly exalted!

Not rebuke alone, but punishment, was to mark the anger of the Lord against envy and evil-speaking. When the Lord removed from the Tabernacle, what was the horror of Aaron, when he looked upon his sister, to behold that she was leprous! Miriam, the highly-favoured—Miriam, the prophetess of Israel, was smitten with that loathsome disorder—that living death which would shut her out from the tents of her kindred, and from the congregation assembled to worship—which would make her unfit so much as to touch the garment of the wife of Moses, of the woman whom she had despised! Miriam had, we may conclude, been a greater offender than Aaron, but he shared in her misery when he beheld it, and turned, in the grief of his heart, to the brother whom both had wronged and insulted.

Alas, my lord, I beseech thee, lay not the sin upon us, wherein we have done foolishly, and wherein we have sinned. Let her not be as one dead, of whom the flesh is half consumed.

It is most striking that the high-priest of Israel seems on this occasion to have dared to approach the Almighty only through a *mediator*; and this may be recorded to remind us that we too, miserable sinners, must seek the intercession of Him of whom Moses was a type.

Moses does not appear to have uttered one word of rebuke or reproach; his lips had been silent under insult, but now they were opened in prayer. "*Heal her, Lord, I beseech Thee,*" cried Moses; and the afflicted Miriam was healed; she was given to the prayer of her brother. For seven days, however, by the Lord's command, the prophetess was shut out from the camp; and we may trust that meek repentance followed a humiliation so painful.

From Hazeroth the Israelites journeyed to Paran. And now Moses must have hoped that the pilgrimage through the desert was nearly ended. He had led the children of Israel in safety to the borders of the Promised Land; Palestine—the country flowing with milk and honey—lay before them. What joy to exchange the desert, with its tracts of arid sand, for fair hills and fertile valleys, clad with the fig-tree, the olive, and the vine! Moses chose out twelve men of distinction, the faithful

Joshua and the pious Caleb amongst them, to go as forerunners of the people, search the land, and bring back a report of the state of the country.

With eager and intense expectation was the return of these spies awaited by the wandering nation, now brought so near to a long-desired home. After forty days' absence the twelve came back, bearing with them one cluster of grapes so large that two men carried it on a staff between them. But if the richness and the beauty of the Promised Land had awakened the admiration of those sent to search it, a deeper impression had been made on them by the warlike character of the nations that held it then in possession. Cowardly fears, born of unbelief, filled the hearts of ten of the spies. Forgetful of the wonders already wrought for them by God, and of the faithfulness of Him whose promise can never be broken, these ten spies infused their own terrors into the people, who, though rescued from Egypt, had still the spirit of bondsmen, and were unworthy of the glorious inheritance which might otherwise have been theirs. *The people be strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled and very great*, cried the spies. They spake of giants also, sons of Anak, in whose sight they were *as grasshoppers*.

Alarmed and bitterly disappointed, the Israelites lifted up their voices and wept. Again they murmured against Moses, and cried, *Would God that we had died*

in the land of Egypt, or would God we had died in the wilderness ! And wherefore hath the Lord brought us unto this land to fall by the sword, that our wives and children may be a prey. Were it not better for us to return to Egypt ? Then, adding open rebellion to cowardice, ingratitude, and unbelief, the mutinous people said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return to Egypt.

Joshua and Caleb, who had in vain attempted to counteract the evil wrought by their ten companions, by urging the people to go up and possess the land, for they were well able to subdue it, saw with indignation the rebellious spirit spreading amongst the hosts of Israel. They rent their clothes, they expostulated, they fearlessly opposed the tide of popular feeling. *The land which we passed through to search it is an exceeding good land, they exclaimed. If the Lord delight in us, then He will bring us into this land, and give it us ; a land that floweth with milk and honey. Only rebel not ye against the Lord, neither fear ye the people of the land, for they are bread for us. Their defence is departed from them, and the Lord is with us ; fear them not.*

These words of faith and courage only stirred up the people to wilder fury ; the very lives of the two brave men were endangered ; the Israelites were ready to stone them for daring to speak the truth.

Then again the awful glory of the Lord appeared, and

Moses heard once more the terrible threat uttered by a righteous God : *How long will this people provoke Me, and how long will it be ere they believe Me, for all the signs which I have shewed amongst them. I will smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them, and will make of thee a greater nation and mightier than they.*

Again rose the earnest prayer, the fervent entreaty of the Intercessor for guilty Israel. Again Moses stood, as it were, between divine wrath and its victim. He besought the Lord, for the honour of His own name, according to the greatness of His goodness, to spare a guilty nation : *Pardon, I beseech Thee, the iniquity of this people, according unto the greatness of Thy mercy, as thou hast forgiven this people from Egypt even until now.*

And the Lord said, I have pardoned according to thy word.

Most gracious answer vouchsafed to pleading love ! A guilty people was spared for the sake of one, and that one whom they had mistrusted—one whom they had insulted and rejected. But though the race of Israel was not swept from the face of the earth, its sin was not to pass altogether unpunished. *I have heard the murmuring of the children of Israel which they murmur against Me, said God. Say unto them, As truly as I live, saith the Lord, as ye have spoken in mine ears so will I do to you. Your carcasses shall fall in this*

wilderness, and all that were numbered of you, from twenty years old and upward, which have murmured against Me; doubtless ye shall not come into the land save Caleb, the son of -Jephunneh, and Joshua, the son of Nun. But your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have despised.

A terrible sentence, but most just. In vain the miserable Israelites sought to evade it. *Lo! we be here, and will go up unto the place which the Lord hath promised,* they exclaimed. It was now too late to show a vain, fitful courage; it could but bring on them slaughter and shame. Moses warned the people in vain. *Go not up, for the Lord is not among you, that ye be not smitten before your enemies.* Where faith would once have secured victory, presumption now led to defeat. Israel fled discomfited before the people of the land.

Then wearily and sadly, bearing with them the sentence of death on all (save two) who had reached the prime of manhood, the doomed people turned away from the glorious land which they were unworthy to enter. The wilderness was to be the place of their sojourn, their wanderings, their graves! Yet mercy watched over them still. They had the guiding pillar and the manna, the ark of the Lord was amongst them, the saint of the Lord was their leader; and we may trust that, of

those whose *carcasses fell in the wilderness*, there were many who, dying in faith, reached a better inheritance above, won by the merits, blood, and mediation of a greater Intercessor than Moses.

For here, dear friends, our subject should raise our thoughts to Him who *ever liveth to make intercession* for us—Jesus Christ, who, at the right hand of God, still pleadeth for the people whom He loves. On earth the Son of God was earnest and unwearied in prayer. We hear of Him passing the whole night in devotion. We know that He prayed for His own which were in the world, whom He loved unto the end. We know that He pleaded for Peter when He saw the cloud of temptation gathering over the head of the devoted apostle. We know that Christ besought His heavenly Father to keep His disciples from the evil, and to sanctify them through His truth. *Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word.* Precious sentence, which gives to the feeblest believer, even to the end of time, an interest in that divine prayer uttered by the Lord on the night of His passion! We know that Christ prayed even for His enemies,—*Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do*; and we know that, raised above all, not on the lofty mountain, but in heaven's glorious heights, our great Leader, our great Lawgiver is our great Intercessor also. Shall they be faint in conflict, or weary in well-doing, or


overwhelmed in sorrow who can lift their eyes toward heaven and say, "There my Saviour is pleading for me" ?

And let the example of Moses, my friends, strengthen and encourage ourselves in intercessory prayer. The Lord is on His mercy-seat, and in the name and through the merits of His Son we—even we—may dare to approach Him. But let us not plead alone for ourselves, nor be selfish even in our devotions. Of the many prayers recorded as breathed by Moses, how numerous and how fervent were those which he poured forth for others ! He bore his people on his heart. Again and again his supplications drew down blessings upon them, or averted the righteous judgments of God. Especially let us remember in prayer those nearest and dearest to us—the husband or child, the sister or brother, and those whom we may be instructing in the knowledge of the truth. As Abraham pleaded for Ishmael, or Moses for Miriam, let us plead for our family, our friends, our enemies, the whole Church of God. The Lord loves to grant such prayers. He is "more ready to hear than we to pray, and is wont to give more than we desire or deserve." Jairus asked Christ to heal the sick, and the Redeemer raised the dead. *Pray one for another that ye may be healed*, writes the Apostle James, adding the gracious assurance,—*The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.*



CHAPTER XXVIII.

TIDINGS.

HE evening had closed in thunder, lightning, and rain. Arthur felt a strong impulse to ask Mr. Eardley to spend the night at the castle, though aware that he had no right to proffer hospitality in the place of his step-mother. While young Madden paused for a moment in doubt, Holdich came forward and asked his pastor to share such poor accommodation as his cottage afforded. Mr. Eardley was about to accept the steward's offer, when a gig arrived for the clergyman, sent from Axe by one of his friends. This settled the point, and in a few minutes Mr. Eardley was on his way back to his home.

Arthur was impatient to return to his own; for the thought of the telegram expected from London would intrude itself ever and anon, even when he had most desired to fix his mind upon holier things. As soon, therefore, as Mr. Eardley had taken his departure,

Arthur was about to return with all speed through the rain to the castle, when, rather to his annoyance, he was stopped in the porch of the cottage by Gideon, who was the only inhabitant of Wildwaste who had attended the lecture on that tempestuous night.

"Good evening, my boy ; I daresay that Mr. Holdich will let you stay by his fire till the storm is over," said Arthur, with hurried courtesy, as he tried to pass his rustic pupil. But Gideon laid his rough brown hand on his teacher's arm, and looked up with an anxious expression in his dull eyes, that made Arthur, impatient as he was, feel that he must stop to hear him.

"Have you anything to say ? I am in haste," observed Arthur.

"Sir, it's Jack Thomson—he be ill—he wants to see you," stuttered Gideon, bringing out his words, as usual, with difficulty.

"I am sorry for it, poor fellow ; I missed him at the class this morning, and yesterday too," said Arthur, with a little self-reproach for having made no inquiry after the cause of his pupil's absence. "I'll go and see him to-morrow."

"To-morrow ! he'll maybe be dead," said Gideon, slowly.

"What ! is he so ill ?" exclaimed Arthur.

"He be very bad--the doctor says very bad—and he's been a-callin' for you," replied Gideon.

"Where does he live?" asked young Madden, now feeling strongly interested.

It was very difficult for poor Gideon to give anything like a description. He rubbed his shaggy head, and muttered something about the Black Bear.

"Near the Black Bear?" suggested Arthur, who chanced to remember having seen the public-house, though it lay beyond his usual morning beat.

"No—past—a long bit—and past the trees."

"Do you mean that he lives in the white cottage which is some way beyond the three poplars that stand alone on the edge of the common?" said Arthur, who recollected the solitary ivy-mantled dwelling as one which he had thought would make a good subject for a sketch.

Gideon's face brightened a little as he nodded his head in assent.

The spot was at a considerable distance, and neither the hour nor the weather rendered a long walk inviting, even had Arthur not been particularly anxious to spend that evening at the castle. But one of his poor ignorant lambs might be dying, and dying without any one near him who could direct his thoughts to God, or soften his last pangs with the hope of pardon and peace. Arthur could not hesitate long.

"Cannot one shorten the distance by cutting across the heath?" he inquired.

Gideon looked uneasy and alarmed at such a suggestion. "Bog! bog!" he muttered, putting out his hands as if to represent a person struggling and sinking. "Don't try that way, sir; don't be a-tryin' it at night. John Styles—dug out—dead."

"Well, I will just step home first, get my cloak, and hear if tidings have come," added Arthur to himself, as he quickly passed out into the darkness—darkness ever and anon illuminated by a vivid flash; as the jagged lightning seemed to split asunder the sky, and the thunder muttered, and rumbled, and rolled!

Was not that solemn thunder the voice of Nature repeating at night the warning which had fallen in the daytime from the lips of a child on the ear of guilt?

The steward and his wife invited Gideon Stone to remain under the shelter of their roof; but he would not do so. "Father will be angered—mother a-wanting me back!" Little did the child of poverty heed the pelt-ing night-rain; a rougher storm had beaten on him ever since his mother had watched by her little one's sick-bed.

With a very quick step Arthur strode up the broad steps beneath the portal of the castle. The butler was at the open door, like one on the watch; he did not wait to be questioned. "No news from London yet, sir," he said.

Arthur saw Lina's white dress in the lighted hall.

"Lina!" he cried; but she hastily turned away, and vanished into an inner apartment. Perhaps she was disappointed at seeing Arthur instead of the bearer of the longed-for telegram, perhaps she chose to let her brother feel that she had not forgiven him yet. Bitter anguish was that moment of petulance to cost the self-willed girl!

The hour of nine struck, and yet no message from London. All the family, Arthur excepted, were assembled in the lighted drawing-room; but conversation often flagged, every one looked pre-occupied, and the slightest sound from without caused something like a thrill of excitement. Lionel had a violent headache, which formed an excuse for his silence. When asked a question by Sir Thomas, he answered at random, and in an irritable manner. Cora tried to show her perfect confidence of success by lively banter, but soon gave up the strained and unnatural attempt at mirth. Lina every ten minutes slipped out of the room to go to the outer door; she fain would be the first to receive the tidings from London. The absence of Arthur was little marked save by his youngest sister.

At last the sound of a door bell rung with violence made all in the drawing-room start to their feet. The sisters would have darted from the apartment, but Lionel, who was nearest to the door, angrily motioned them back, disliking "anything like a scene." They

followed close on his footsteps, however, and Sir Thomas and Mrs. Madden were not far behind, while every servant in the castle managed to be near enough to catch a glimpse of the messenger from Portley who stood in the hall, the rain dripping from his glistening waterproof coat. The butler, ready on the watch, had taken a green paper from his hand—the next minute it was in that of Lionel. He held it up to the lamp, gazed on it for one moment, then with a muttered “Lost!—all lost!” flung it to Cora, and rushed upstairs!

“This is not—cannot be true! it is all a dream—a horrible dream!” murmured Cora, closing her eyes after she had read the telegram.

“Nay, nay, my dear child, take comfort!” said Mrs. Madden, in her homely good-natured way.

But Cora was in no mood to receive comfort; she started back from the touch of the soft plump hand, and with a hysterical sob, hurried away to bury herself in the solitude of her room.

Lina’s pride kept her firm in that trying moment, or perhaps the young girl was too much excited to realize the extent of the misfortune. “It was a mere matter of money, after all,” she observed; “we have youth and strength to bear us through the battle of life, and will take care to be dependent on no one!” Lina felt proud of her own fortitude and courage, and wished that



THE TELEGRAM.

Arthur were present to see how bravely her spirit could rise above misfortune, how cheerfully she could bear what had overwhelmed her brother and sister. Lina returned to the drawing-room with her step-mother and Sir Thomas: her pulse beat fast, and her cheek was burning, but she conversed with unfaltering voice, and scorned to join in Mrs. Madden's plaintive laments, "Dear, dear, to think it should all end in this way!"

"It is what I have foreseen all along," said Sir Thomas.

"I must go and tell Arthur," cried Lina suddenly; "strange—strange that he should show so little interest in the news as not so much as to come down-stairs to hear it!"

"Mr. Arthur left the castle an hour ago," said the butler, who had just brought in the silver tray with the coffee.

"Left the castle!—what—in the storm—at such an hour!" exclaimed the astonished listeners.

Lina felt uneasy at her brother's absence; her own conscience was not at rest; a feeling of vague fear came over her, when, about ten minutes afterwards, the castle bell sounded again—faintly as if touched by a timid hand, then loudly, as if the person who rang were in haste or alarm.

The butler again appeared. "Here's a boy—a rough sort of boy at the door; he says that he must speak with one of the ladies."

"The ladies see no one at this hour," said Sir Thomas, who already spoke as master of the castle.

"I can scarce make out what the boy means, sir; but he seems very anxious and frightened, sir, and—" the butler turned towards Lina as he added, "it's something about Mr. Arthur."

Lina darted past the servant, and into the hall, and

instantly recognized Gideon Stone, who looked half-drowned, and thoroughly frightened.

"Is anything the matter with my brother?" exclaimed Lina, in a tone little calculated to lessen alarm.

"I be'es afeard—he's taken the cut—and it's been a-raining days—and there was John Styles—and oh! they must come quick!" stuttered forth poor Gideon Stone.

"Why must we come quickly—what on earth do you mean, boy?" cried Lina wildly.

"He's been a-shoutin' for help—I heard him—and nobody won't go near—and there was John Styles—"

"Oh, Holdich, I'm so thankful to see you—you will make out what all this means!" exclaimed the young lady, turning her anxious eyes on the steward, who had come up to the castle from some vague apprehension of danger, on seeing Gideon run gasping past his cottage.

"Do you mean, boy, that you have any reason to fear that Mr. Arthur has lost his way in the bog?" said Holdich in his quick decided manner.

"Yes—he's there—he's a-sinkin'—I heard him call for help—oh! he'll be down—down—down!" and to the horror of Lina, who had never before seen a sufferer in a fit, the poor boy suddenly fell at her feet, struggling and gasping, and unconscious of all that was passing around him!

"Oh, what can be done for him—what can be done!" exclaimed the terror-stricken girl.

Holdich knew that he could do nothing for the afflicted Gideon, but that it was necessary to do something, and that with the utmost promptness, to save the life of Arthur. The steward was one who never lost his calmness and presence of mind, whatever the emergency might be, but the short rapid orders which he gave to the servants to bring ropes, poles, torches, opened the eyes of the wretched Lina to the imminent peril before her of receiving a blow, compared to which the loss of fortune was but as the stroke of a falling leaf!

So rapidly were Holdich's orders obeyed, so quickly the alarm spread through the castle of the danger of one who was a general favourite, that in a few minutes all the men-servants were gathered together with flaring torches, ropes, and whatever was likely to be of use, ready to hasten off to Wildwaste, regardless of weather. Poor Gideon was slowly recovering from his fit, and stared with vacant wondering eyes at the scene of bustle and excitement, as Holdich and his companions hurried forth from the castle.

"Lina, my dear, where are you going—are you mad?" cried Mrs. Madden, whom the sound of loud voices and hurried steps had drawn from her easy-chair in the drawing-room.

"You will drive me mad if you stay me!" cried Lina, rushing wildly down the steps, careless of the howling blast that blew back her ringlets, or the rain that beat

on her uncovered head, and drenched her light dress and shivering form! Her mind could hold but the one thought of Arthur, the brother dear as her soul, the brother from whom she had parted in anger and turned away when he called her by name, the brother who might at that moment be enduring a fearful, horrible death! Lina followed in the track of those gleaming lights, which were with such difficulty guarded from the wind and rain, with the dreadful sensation of one in a night-mare, vainly trying to rush on at speed, for at every step, after reaching the common, her little satin shoes sank deep in the clay, and it seemed as if with all her struggles to hasten on she could never get up with the party who were moving on before her. There were lights gleaming at Wildwaste; the party under Holdich found the hamlet all astir: other ears besides Gideon's had heard cries for help, but in the confusion of the night and the storm no one had dared to make any definite attempt to save a perishing fellow-creature.

"Go into yon cottage, Miss Lina, this is no place for you," said Holdich, as to the surprise and distress of the steward the light of his lantern fell on the form of the miserable girl. "We will do all that can be done," he added with respectful compassion, "but you—"

"I can do nothing!" exclaimed Lina, wringing her hands.

"But *pray*, lady," said Holdich; and the low tones of that deep voice vibrated on the ear of Lina, after the speaker had left her to go on his dangerous quest.

Lina remained as if rooted to the ground, on the nearest spot on which she could stand with safety. No persuasions of the cottagers could persuade her to retire into one of their huts. She felt that life or death depended on one terrible cast, and she could not stir till the die was thrown.

"Pray—pray," she kept murmuring to herself, as if by force of repetition to bring her mind into an attitude of prayer. But at that moment of terror she could not approach God as a Father; if she thought of Him it was as the Lawgiver whose commandments she had broken, whose will she had not cared to obey. The lightning of terrible trouble had flashed on her soul a fearful consciousness that she had never yet so much as set out on the path to Canaan; pleasure had been her goal, and her inclination her guide!

"Found! found!" suddenly the word rang over the wild waste of morass, sending a thrill through the soul of every one who heard it, every one whose eyes were straining to pierce the darkness in the direction which Holdich and his companions had taken. But there was no tone of triumph in the shout, it rather added to the terrors of the scene.

"Living?" hallooed Bolder, who was standing close

to Lina, and who thus gave voice to the question which her trembling lips could not frame.

No answer! He twice repeated the question; then the mournful reply, "*Too late!*" came borne like a death-knell on the blast. It was not spoken by Holdich; he, with a rope round his waist, himself half buried in the morass, was straining to reach a *hand*—all that remained above the smothering mire—a hand upraised as if in a last dying appeal for help! The strong man reached it, touched it, grasped it,—then under his breath echoed the words, *Too late!* Life had for some time been extinct, the hand which Robert Holdich held in his powerful grasp was that of a corpse!





CHAPTER XXIX

A NIGHT OF TERRORS.



WHEN Arthur went on his night expedition through the storm and rain, after crossing the stile and gaining the highroad which skirted the common of Wildwaste, he had pursued his course along that road, being more than doubtful as to whether he could find his way at night by the foot-track which crossed the heath. Thus lighted by fitful flashes from the thunder-clouds, the young man had with little difficulty, but much discomfort, reached the cottage of Thomson, which was at a distance of nearly two miles from the castle by that circuitous route.

Arthur knocked at the door of the cottage, which, after a little delay, was opened by John Thomson, the father of his pupil, who looked more surprised than pleased to see a gentleman there at so unusual an hour. The rough workman was little disposed to welcome his

unexpected guest. His answers to Arthur's inquiries were short and almost surly—his boy was better—was asleep—the doctor had given him something to make him sleep—he could not be disturbed—the gen'l'man might see him, if he chose, in the morning.

Arthur felt rather provoked at having had his walk in the storm for nothing, and turned from the inhospitable door almost angry with himself for having obeyed an impulse of humanity—a call of duty. He proceeded at as rapid a pace towards home as the heavy state of the road would admit of, being very anxious to reach the castle before news should arrive from London. He had not gone many steps when the clatter of a horse's hoofs behind him made Arthur pause and turn. Could the messenger from Portley Station—the bearer of the important telegram—be overtaking him on the road? The glimpse which Arthur caught of the rider as he trotted past dissipated this idea. He seemed to be a belated clergyman, returning perhaps from a visitation to a distant part of his parish.

Arthur had little time, however, for drawing this or any other conclusion. The rider had not gone on twenty yards in front, when a man armed with a heavy bludgeon started up suddenly from the ditch by the side of the road, and with a violent blow knocked the traveller off his horse. Arthur could not see the blow given, but he heard it, and with a shout which brought

John Thomson out of his cottage, rushed forward to the rescue of the assailed traveller. The highwayman, about to repeat his blow, stopped, startled by the loud sudden shout ; at the instant that Arthur reached the spot where the ruffian stood undecided, a vivid flash lighted up the scene, and in the vivid glare the two mutually recognized each other. Abner Stone saw the same indignant countenance, the same uplifted hand that had stayed him before from committing a deed of blood ; he saw the face of the man who had laboured amidst falling timbers and crackling flames to preserve his cottage from destruction.

The robber flung down his bludgeon and fled—not homewards—he dared not return to his home ; detected in the very act of committing a capital offence, Abner had but one object before him, that of making his escape while darkness should enable him to evade the pursuit of justice. Could he reach the railway-station in time for the night-train, he might gain the nearest seaport before the law could arrest its victim. Abner rushed on, muttering an imprecation against Ford, his tempter and his accomplice, who—as Stone believed—had hung back from aiding him in accomplishing the crime to which he had prompted and impelled him. Abner little knew that at that moment the miserable Ford, fast imprisoned in the treacherous bog, sinking inch by inch in the morass, from which no effort of his own

could release him, was calling in vain for that help which was to arrive—too late !

There was a terrible analogy between the wretched man's career through life and its awful close on the moor. Turning from the right path in the guilty pursuit of unhallowed gain, Ford had sunk gradually—with his eyes open—to lower and lower depths of sin ! The lightnings which flashed over his head, and might once have served to guide him, but startled him now with glimpses of the place of safety which he never would reach ; and the thunder sounding so lately a disregarded warning, but spoke now the terrors of doom for sins unrepented of, and therefore unforgiven. Let a veil be drawn over the horrors of such a departure from life.

Arthur did not attempt to pursue Abner Stone, but with the assistance of Thomson, carried the insensible form of the traveller into the cottage which was near. No bones appeared to be broken, and Arthur hoped that the gentleman was only temporarily suffering from the shock of the blow and the fall. Arthur sent off Thomson instantly for the surgeon at Portley, which place was considerably nearer than Axe, while he himself helped Thomson's wife to place the injured man in a bed, and apply such simple remedies as seemed most likely to restore him to consciousness. As soon as the sufferer showed symptoms of reviving, Arthur hastened back towards the castle, from whence he doubted not that



THE WOUNDED MAN.

Mrs. Madden would send such comforts as might be required.

When Arthur reached that part of the road which was nearest to the hamlet of Wildwaste, his attention was drawn thither, and his interest awakened by the sight of moving lights, and the sound of many voices, raised as if in excitement and fear. It was not like the noise of a drunken riot, or a quarrel, such as was too often heard at night from that wretched hamlet, and Arthur instinctively turned off his direct course, to ascertain the cause of such a disturbance.

Meanwhile Lina in mute horror awaited on the edge of the morass the return of Holdich and his companions, with the shapeless mass of seeming mire and clay, which had once borne the form of a man. With the utmost difficulty and effort it had been extricated from its deathbed and grave. Lina could not weep—could not utter a sound—she stood there with clenched hands and fixed stare, her loosened hair, dripping with rain, hanging wildly over her shoulders. She looked like some one whom some sight of horror had suddenly congealed into stone!

“Lina! you here!” exclaimed a voice close behind her, a well-known voice, but one that she had never thought to hear again! Lina’s lips were unsealed; she uttered a cry; stretched forth her trembling arms, and overpowered by the sudden transition from crushing fear to delirious joy, fell senseless into the arms of the brother who seemed to be given to her from the dead!





CHAPTER XXX.

AFTER-THOUGHTS.



SHALL very briefly glance at the events of the three following days. The traveller saved by Arthur proved to be, not the agent for whom Abner Stone had lain in wait, but a missionary, who on the following year was to start for the Holy Land. His injuries, though not very serious, made him unfit to pursue his travels for several days. He declined Mrs. Madden's offer to receive him into the castle, and preferred remaining awhile at the cottage, where Arthur spent many hours with him and the sick pupil, who had passed the crisis of his disorder, but whose recovery was slow. Arthur, at the missionary's request, wrote to his widowed sister, Mrs. Smith, to inform her of what had occurred, but to prevent her coming, as she was engaged in nursing a daughter, who, as well as herself, was to accompany the traveller to Palestine.

The missionary, lying on his pallet-bed in the humble

dwelling, listened with deep interest to the simple instructions in religious truth which Arthur imparted to his sick pupil, whose conscience had been roused and awakened to an extent which, but for his illness, his young teacher might never have known.

The law-decision against the Maddens was, as the reader is aware, less of a surprise to Arthur than to any other member of his family ; he had for long looked forward to this trial, and received it firmly and calmly at last, not as coming from the verdict of man, but from the will of a higher power. At the same time Arthur exerted himself, as far as he could, to find some opening to independence—some means of supporting those who would henceforth look to him as their earthly protector. For Lionel was utterly prostrated by the blow, for which he had not been prepared. He kept his bed for days, and the state of both his health and Lina's made their kind-hearted step-mother declare that it was quite impossible that any of the party should quit Castle Lestrange.

"At least for the next fortnight—or week," blandly suggested the considerate Sir Thomas.

On Arthur, therefore, every arrangement devolved, and it was well for him, perhaps, that the necessity for thinking and acting prevented him from brooding over the painful position in which he and his family were placed. When not engaged at Wildwaste, or by the bedside of Jack Thomson, Arthur was searching the

columns of the *Times*, answering advertisements, or writing to friends in London, through whose influence he might hope to get some employment. It was with Arthur a busy, an anxious, but not an unhappy time ; each day brought its own joys as well as its own cares. The more young Madden saw of the invalid stranger in Thomson's cottage, the more he rejoiced in having been made the earthly means of preserving a life devoted to charity and religion. A warm sympathy sprang up between the elder and younger Christian, and a friendship was commenced which, as each felt, would not end with their lives upon earth.

Of Abner Stone nothing more was heard from the night of the storm. The cause of his flight was soon known, and Deborah mourned as a woman whose fate is sadder than widowhood, who sees her children left more than orphans in a desolate world. Arthur knew not what comfort to speak to sorrow like hers ; and yet he felt that when time should have softened that sorrow and shame, Deborah's humble home would be both a holier and a happier abode, for being relieved of the presence of one unworthy of the name of husband or father.

But the sweetest drop in Arthur's cup was the hope that his prayers for his darling sister had been answered. There was a marked change in Lina. In her anguish of fear and remorse on that awful night of the storm,

Lina had taken the supposed loss of her brother as a direct judgment upon herself for the proud, selfish, rebellious spirit which she had indulged. She remembered her anger against that brother when he had spoken to her of obedience to God's holy law, she recalled the impatience with which she had received his gentle attempts to prepare her for an unfavourable verdict from London; she knew that she had declared that to lose their cause was to lose all, and she believed that those words, uttered in folly, were drawing down a terrible retribution upon her. When Arthur, contrary to her fears, was restored again to his sister, the revulsion of thankful delight only strengthened the power of conscience within that young and loving heart. Lina believed that she was reprieved, that she was granted time to atone for the past, and by her obedience and good works win God's favour for the future. There was much of ignorance, much of blindness in this view of the subject; but Lina was very young, and had hitherto given little serious thought to the subject of religion. It was only now that she recognized it to be a *practical* thing, influencing the conduct, directing the life, and purifying the heart.

In her thankful joy for Arthur's restoration, Lina made a vow to devote herself to the service of God. She doubted not her own power to keep that vow, nor that her doing so would give her a claim to the favour of heaven. Lina's religion—if that name could be given

to it at all—had hitherto been one of *sentiment* alone, it had now become one of *fear*. She had thought too little of obedience ; now there was danger lest she should put obedience in the place of living *faith working by love*. Little was the young penitent aware that the course on which she was entering was likely to end either in presumptuous self-righteousness, as in the case of Tychicus Bolder, or in discouragement—perhaps in despair, should conscience faithfully perform its part. Lina's mistake was this—having discovered that she had wandered from the right track, she believed that she had power to retrace her steps and start afresh ; having found out the danger of disobedience, she imagined that she could save herself by future obedience.

Arthur was not able to read the secrets of his sister's heart; he only saw, with the keenest pleasure, the change in her actions and demeanour. Lina now uttered no word of complaint at the loss of fortune, and she tried, though with imperfect success, to curb any outward expression of dislike towards Sir Thomas Brereton. Though her nerves had been greatly shaken by the events of the Tuesday night, and she regarded Wildwaste almost with feelings of horror, she insisted on accompanying her brother thither, and while Arthur was engaged with his class, Lina did all in her power to comfort Deborah Stone. Lina gave hours to devotion and Bible-reading, worked with her own hands for the poor, resolved never

again to miss an opportunity of attending religious services, and set about the reformation of her own life with all the zeal of a new convert. Cora turned down her lips and observed that Lina was growing as mad as Arthur himself, but was too much engrossed with her own miseries to pay much attention to either. Sir Thomas smiled bland approbation, spoke of energies developed and talents improved, for he hoped that Lina's efforts might in time be directed into some channel that would make her independent of assistance from her step-mother's purse. He was especially delighted when he found Lina cutting down an old dress of her own into a small one for Lottie Stone.

"There is something refreshing to the mind to see a young lady ply scissors and needle in that practical way," observed the knight, "instead of indulging in the laborious idleness which is, I regret to say, so common. What our fair countrywomen call work is usually but an attempt to kill Time with a crochet-needle, or strangle him with bright skeins of floss-silk or German wool!"

Lina cared little for the commendation of Sir Thomas, but she had resolved to treat him with tolerable courtesy. "I suppose," she said, without raising her eyes from her seam, "that you call accomplishments—music and drawing, for instance—but laborious idleness."

"That does not follow—that conclusion by no means follows the observation which I made," answered the

knight. "Accomplishments may be turned to excellent account. Artists have drawn cheques as well as pictures, performers turned musical notes into notes of the Bank of England."

Sir Thomas gave his peculiar little laugh at his own very mild joke, and drew out his whisker; Lina coloured and bit her lip, she understood his words as a suggestion.

The knight remained watching Lina's fingers for some moments, and then broke silence with the observation, "How remarkably unfortunate Arthur has been!"

"What do you mean?" asked Lina, glancing up quickly from her work.

"I mean that all his laurels are so barren! I went over to Wildwaste this morning, to have a look at the scene of that poor wretch Ford's disaster,"—Lina shuddered at the recollection of his fate;—"a little talkative iron-gray man tacked himself on as a cicerone, and by his account Arthur has done enough to win the Victoria Cross three times over."

The little furrow which had indented Lina's brow was smoothed down into complacency at the last sentence.

"But King Arthur himself," pursued the knight, "could not have won fame at Wildwaste, or from such exploits as these of his namesake! First Arthur interferes to save a drunken fellow from beating his wife, exactly the kind of interference which is certain to

please neither party ; then he rushes into the middle of a fire to pull out a publican, who was only saved from the flames then, to be smothered in a bog a fortnight afterwards ! Then he rescues a traveller from a high-wayman ; and instead of the stranger turning out to be some prince, or secretary of state at least, whose gratitude might be worth a place or a pension, he's only a penniless missionary, who, I understand, has not even yet taken clerical orders !”

“But whose life may be as precious as that of any crowned monarch !” cried Lina, with some indignation at the worldly tone of her companion.

“I daresay that it is—I have no doubt that it is—at least to himself,” replied the knight with a little shrug ; “but as regards our poor dear Arthur—”

“Arthur requires no pity !” exclaimed Lina with warmth ; “and as for reward—the knowledge that he has served a good man, and lengthened a valuable life, is reward enough to a heart like *his* !”

“There is not even that satisfaction in the case of the miserable Ford,” observed Sir Thomas, not appearing to take notice of the emphasis laid by Lina on the pronoun ; “by-the-by, the little lecture at the cottage is likely to be crowded this evening.”

“Why should it be more crowded than usual ?” asked Lina.

“The iron-gray man is my authority,” answered the


knight. "‘Sir,’ says he, ‘ain’t it a wonderful coincidence that the parson will have to lecture this evening upon Korah, Dathan, and Abiram being swallowed up alive by the earth! He’ll be bringing up as an example the fate of that wretched publican who was smothered on the night of the storm, and who was as bad as any one of them. Take my word for it—he was about nothing good when the judgment overtook him—why should he be cutting across the common at night? All Wildwaste is going to hear the parson improve the occasion.’"

"Mr. Eardley is too much of a gentleman—too much of a Christian," exclaimed Lina, "to preach at any one living, or against any poor wretch just laid in his grave! I am going with my brother to the lecture this evening, and I feel no doubt that I shall be able to tell you tomorrow that those have been disappointed who would make religion itself a cloak for their malice, hatred, and revenge." And, rising hastily, Lina gathered up her work and left the room, feeling that if she remained longer she would certainly break her resolutions, and say something which, in a calmer moment, she might wish unsaid.





CHAPTER XXXI.

 TO large a number of the families from Wildwaste and its neighbourhood joined the little congregation on that evening, that both the rooms of Holdich were crowded, and he had to leave the outer door open that those who could not be accommodated within might at least hear the sound of the clergyman's voice. Arthur, with Lina resting on his arm, had a little difficulty in making his way through the throng. It gratified Lina to remark that her brother, on his entrance, was the observed of all observers, that every eye was bent on him, while a low whisper of "that's he," passed through the crowd. Arthur felt uncomfortable at being the object of so much notice, which he partly attributed, and perhaps with justice, to the curiosity of the people to see how the gentleman bore the loss of his fortune.

Tychicus Bolder pushed himself a little forward, and greeted Arthur with the remark, uttered in an almost triumphant tone, "It's an awful thing, sir, a very awful

thing, that death of Dan Ford in the morass! To think that you should have risked your life in the fire only that his should be lengthened by a fortnight! Time to repent, sir, time to repent—but time, I fear, thrown away!” Arthur turned from the Pharisee with a feeling of disgust which he could hardly suppress.

“I see Lottie’s red cloak yonder, and Gideon’s honest face,” he whispered to Lina; “but Deborah does not seem to be here.”

“She had no heart to come,” answered Lina; “she has had no news of her husband.”

LECTURE IX.—DESERT WANDERINGS.

The Scriptures give us a less detailed account of the events which occurred during the lengthened period of nearly thirty-eight years which yet remained of the pilgrimage in the desert, after the Israelites were constrained to turn back from the borders of Canaan. We know that the voice of mourning and weeping was often heard in the camp, and that when the people moved from one place of long halt to another, they left many a grave behind them! Sadly must the aged have turned their eyes northward towards the fair land from which they were shut out, like Adam and Eve from a paradise lost! They must never quit the desert waste for its verdant pastures and vine-clad hills; their dust must sleep far from the land which would be the home of their children.

Some very remarkable events, however, stand out from the rest, and claim our attention. I will but lightly touch upon the first, which was a very alarming mutiny which broke out against Moses and Aaron.

Dathan and Abiram, descendants of Reuben, conspired with Korah, who was a Levite and a blood-relation of Moses and his brother, against the authority of those whom God Himself had appointed as the Lawgiver and the High Priest of Israel. So formidable did this conspiracy become, that no fewer than two hundred and fifty *princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation*, men of renown, were drawn into the guilt of rebellion!

Terrible was the punishment which followed their transgression! The earth opened and swallowed up Dathan and Abiram, their tents, and all that they had possessed, while fire from heaven smote the mutinous Levites who were offering incense to the Lord.

Yet even the sight of these fearful judgments did not quench the spirit of rebellion. Though the punishments of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram were such as could only have been inflicted by the direct interposition of God, all the multitude on the following day murmured against Moses and Aaron, saying, "Ye have killed the people of the Lord!" And lo! the cloud covered the tabernacle, and the glory of the Lord shone around.

And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Get you up from among this congregation, that I may consume them

as in a moment ! And Moses and Aaron fell on their faces.

And Moses said unto Aaron, Take a censer, and put fire therein from off the altar, put on incense and go quickly unto the congregation, and make an atonement for them : for there is wrath gone out from the Lord ; the plague is begun.

And Aaron took as Moses had commanded, and he run into the midst of the congregation,.....and he stood between the dead and the living, and the plague was stayed. But fourteen thousand seven hundred of the transgressors had perished in that place !

After long wandering in the wilderness, as the appointed time of deliverance drew nigh, the hosts of Israel encamped in Kadesh, in the desert of Zin, once again near to the border of the Promised Land. And there Miriam slept her last sleep, the first of the three gifted children of Amram in death as in birth, and was buried in the desert. The Jews have a tradition that Miriam had governed the women, as Moses the men of Israel.

The sojourn at Kadesh was marked by another event which was the cause of much sorrow to Moses. All the malice and ingratitude, all the insults and slanders to which he had hitherto for so many years been exposed, had inflicted no real injury upon him, for he had received them as the river receives the pelting hail which can leave no permanent mark on its tranquil bosom ;

his wrongs were swallowed up in his patience : the more man sought to humble and injure, the more God raised and honoured His servant. But even Moses was to betray at last the frailty of human nature, and that on the very point in which God's grace had shone most conspicuously in him. It has been remarked that Abraham, the father of the faithful, sinned from want of *faith*, the bold Peter from want of *courage*, the meek Moses from want of *patience*. So little can the most illustrious saint depend on anything in himself ; it is God that worketh in him both to will and to do.

In Kadesh there was again a lack of water, and the people, untaught by the many lessons of the past, gathered themselves together against Moses and his brother the high-priest.

The Lord, long-suffering and gracious, once more showed His power and His mercy towards this ungrateful people. His command was given to Moses: *Take the rod, and gather thou the assembly together, thou and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye to the rock before their eyes ; and it shall give forth his water, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock.*

Moses took the rod, which had already worked such wonders ; but the spirit of meekness and love towards the people, and of reverence towards the Almighty, seemed at that hour of temptation to have been darkened by human passion. Moses for once forgot to render

glory to God. *Hear now, ye rebels*, he cried ; *must we fetch you water out of this rock ?* And instead of obeying the command to *speak* to the rock, Moses raised his hand and struck it twice with his rod, and the life-giving waters flowed forth. The eager people drank abundantly, but the Lord was displeased. *Because ye believed Me not, to sanctify Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this people into the land which I have given them.*

The words, *ye believed Me not*, linked with the conduct of Moses on this occasion, give us reason to surmise that in working this miracle his faith had been rather in the rod, than in the God who had so often endowed it with supernatural power. This is an error into which the Lord's servants in every age are liable to fall. Justly prizing the *means* of grace, they are in danger of forgetting that no means—prayer or preaching, church or school—are of any avail at all, but through the blessing of God.

I have often referred to Moses as a type of the Lord Jesus Christ, but in this passage of the Lawgiver's life, we must seek for the type in the rock that was smitten, rather than in the prophet who smote it. St. Paul leaves us in no doubt on this subject. After writing of the manna as *spiritual meat*, and the water that gushed forth as *spiritual drink*, he declares of the rock, *That rock was Christ*—that is, a *type* of the smitten Lord, as

the manna and the water were types of the blessings received through Him. It is from the wounds of Christ pierced for us that salvation flows forth to His people. This truth is beautifully expressed in the well-known hymn—

“ Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee!
Let the water and the blood
From Thy riven side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure,
Cleanse me from its guilt and power !”

We doubt not that Moses felt keenly the punishment inflicted upon him, and the refusal of the Lord to grant his earnest prayer: *I pray Thee, let me go over and see the goodly land that is beyond Jordan, that goodly mountain and Lebanon.* Yet may we be well assured that even in chastising His servant, the Lord gave to Moses new proof of His tender loving-kindness. Moses might not enter the earthly Canaan, but to such as was Israel's leader, death could be only gain. Long had he borne the burden and heat of the day, long had he been exposed to bitter reproach and reviling—weariness was soon to be exchanged for rest, and tribulation for glory. Moses was to be spared the toilsome campaigns which must follow entrance into Palestine. If a chastising rod was laid upon Moses, it was a rod, like that of Aaron, which brought forth buds, blossoms, and fruit.

At the next station, that of Hor, Moses was to have

mournful experience of the truth that prolonged life must bring with it partings and bereavements. Here Aaron was *gathered to his people*. There was a mournful solemnity, and yet a holy calm, about the departure of the first high-priest of Israel. At the command of the Lord, Aaron, accompanied by his brother and his own son Eleazar, ascended Mount Hor in the sight of all the congregation. Moses there disrobed Aaron of his priestly garments, and put them on Eleazar, his appointed successor. There is no record of mournful words spoken, the brother's last embraces, or the father's parting blessing on his son ; but we can well believe that in such an hour the thought, "We separate but for a little while ; he goes first, but I soon will follow," must have been as balm to the heart of Moses. He has recorded his brother's decease in the simple words, *Aaron died there on the top of the mount. And when all the congregation saw that Aaron was dead, they mourned for Aaron thirty days, even all the house of Israel.*

The last event of the desert wanderings which we shall consider to-day is one fraught with the deepest interest to us all. In it, as in a glass, we see not only God's dealings with Israel, but with all generations of men. It is the Gospel revealed in a type ; and when our blessed Saviour taught Nicodemus at night, He took this event to illustrate the all-important doctrine of a world's redemption. Let us with the deepest reverence

meditate on the lesson which the Son of God Himself designed to draw from the history of Moses.

I shall give the account of the event before us in the words of Scripture, and then attempt, by God's help, to show how it reveals to us our own state as sinners before God, and the one only appointed means of salvation.

And they journeyed from Mount Hor by the way of the Red Sea, to compass the land of Edom: and the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way. And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread.

And the Lord sent fiery serpents amongst the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died. Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned; for we have spoken against the Lord, and against thee: pray unto the Lord that He take away the serpents from us.

And Moses prayed for the people. And the Lord said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh on it, shall live.

Here, my friends, three things are brought prominently before us—the *poison*, the *cure* for the poison, and the *way of applying* that cure. Satan is the old serpent whose venom of *sin* has spread through all the world,



THE FIERY SERPENT.

carrying misery and death to the descendants of Adam. We may not always know our danger : an Israelite might have slept calmly, unconscious of the fiery serpent coiled within the shadow of his tent, or under the folds of his

garment. Such is the case with the *unconcerned* soul that thinks not of heaven or hell; such is the case with the *self-righteous* soul, that sees but the danger of others, unconscious that sin, though perhaps hidden and secret, lies at its own door. But if such an Israelite had suddenly awoke, on feeling the sharp pang, and had beheld the reptile whose fang had inflicted it, what would his conduct naturally have been? He would have started up and fled in terror to any one from whom he could hope for relief; he would willingly have done anything, endured anything, so that his deadly wound might be cured, an antidote found for the poison burning in his veins.

Such is the picture of the awakened soul that realizes that it has been poisoned by sin, and that *sin when it is finished bringeth forth death*. How many, startled into conviction, have made the wildest attempts to save themselves from the judgment of God which they dreaded! Some have attempted by works of self-denial and almsgiving to pour, as it were, healing ointment upon a wounded conscience; others have submitted to painful penance, have starved or scourged the body to cure the deadly hurt of the soul. Oh, my friends, what avail these, if used as means of salvation? Could medicine or ointment, could lancing or burning, save one whom the fiery serpent had bitten?

No; there was but *one* means of cure, and, like the

blood of the paschal lamb, it was the means which God Himself had appointed, means which no effort of man's wisdom could ever have devised. What was it that cured the Israelites wounded by the serpent's deadly fang? Simply *the look of faith* at the brazen serpent raised on high. And what cures the penitent soul of the fatal poison of sin? Simply *the look of faith* at a dying Saviour lifted up on the cross. Hear ye the Lord's own most precious words, and may His Spirit write them on our hearts: *As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.* Hear His call to a perishing world: *Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth* (Isa. xlv. 22).

My beloved brethren, if there be one here to whom the danger of his soul has been mercifully revealed—one who can say in sincerity and truth, *I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart is faint: I abhor myself in dust and in ashes!*—to such a one would I say, Where do you turn for healing; how do you seek rest for your conscience, life for your perishing soul? Is it in works, in penance, in efforts to save yourself; or do you simply turn the eye of faith to your Saviour, *looking unto Jesus* for healing, *looking unto Jesus* for life, *looking unto Jesus* for strength to render henceforth to Him

the joyful service of grateful love? No other cure will avail. To quote once more from the beautiful hymn to which I have already referred,—

“Not the labour of my hands
Can fulfil the law's demands ;
Could my zeal no respite know,
Could my tears for ever flow,
All for sin could not atone :
Thou must save—and Thou alone !”

Nor think that the blessed doctrine of *free salvation* through faith in the merits and blood of the Lord offers the least encouragement to those who would lead a life of sin. What! would the bitten Israelite who had been cured by the look of faith turn to caress and press to his bosom the serpent that had once well-nigh destroyed him? Would he not loathe it, shun it, or seek to crush it beneath his heel? Such is the true Christian's feeling towards sin in whatever shape it come to tempt him. It is his enemy—it has nearly been his destroyer—he could welcome suffering, sorrow, anything rather than sin.

Before we part this night, my friends, let me suggest a few questions, which I would earnestly entreat you thoughtfully and prayerfully to press each upon his own conscience.

Do I feel that sin has endangered my soul; and if so, what cure have I sought for the wound?

Am I *looking to Jesus* as my only hope and my all-sufficient Saviour?

Does the thought of His dying love constrain me to live and to die unto Him?

May the God of all grace preserve us from self-deception in this matter of vital importance. May we be kept alike from the ignorance which knows not of danger, and from the pride which rejects a cure. May we each, in child-like simplicity, trust the promise of God our Saviour,—*He that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out.*





CHAPTER XXXII.

LOOKING FORWARD.

MR. EARDLEY'S lecture had left a very different impression on the minds of two of his hearers. "What a noble opportunity he has lost!" muttered Tychicus Bolder to himself, as he wandered home in the clear frosty starlight. "He might have drawn such a striking lesson from the death of that wretched Ford—an event which has made such a stir in the hamlet—a bad man, buried alive, like Dathan and Abiram—buried alive! why, the application came straight to the parson's hand! And he leaves it scarcely touched, to go on to matters of faith. Mr. Eardley, to my mind, is not much of a preacher; he's very well-meaning, but very ill-judged. If *I* had had the lecture to give on such an occasion, not one of the hearers should have been able to close an eye this night."

So mused Tychicus Bolder; but to Lina's mind the well-known story from Scripture and the familiar hymn

had come almost with the force of a new revelation of truth. She had been one lately awakened to a sense of the danger of her soul; in the picture of the wounded Israelite suddenly aroused from sleep, she saw her own likeness. But where had been *the look of faith* to Him who alone could heal. Lina had been making vows and resolutions, had been seeking to watch and to work; she had determined to *atone* for past carelessness by a life devoted to charitable works. She had believed that at the end of her life and labours she might perhaps enter heaven as a *recompense* for what she had suffered and done. How much more simple, how much more beautiful, how much more joyful, the scriptural direction—*Look unto Me and be ye saved!* A child-like trust in the atonement of Christ, and then a child-like obedience to His will—such was the new view of religion which now dawned on the soul of Lina and filled it with light and joy. She could *merit* nothing from God's justice, but she would *receive* all from His love.

As Lina sat that night by her window, looking forth at the orbs of glory that glimmered in the clear cold sky, her thoughts fell into an allegorical train; could she have given them shape in words, they would have been something like this :—

“A short time since I was like a child idling by the wayside, amusing myself with gathering wild-flowers, careless of the truth that I had a long way to travel,

and that if night should overtake me lingering there, I must assuredly perish. A chariot came by that could bear me onwards securely and swiftly, and at the same moment I was struck by a sudden conviction of my danger. I laid my hand on that chariot, but instead of entering and resting upon it, I trusted to my own efforts to reach a place of safety; I ran, as it were, alongside. How soon should I have grown weary, how soon should I have stumbled and fallen, and been left behind in helpless despair! Mr. Eardley has shown me that I am both permitted and commanded to enter the chariot at once, and rest all my weight on that which will bear me on in the way of holiness and peace.

‘Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling.’

Oh, never, never felt I before how true are those words, and how sweet.”

The morning of Saturday came, the last day of that week so eventful for the Maddens. How little could Lina have guessed when, with such overwhelming anxiety, she had awaited tidings from London at the opening of that week, how calm, and hopeful, and thoughtful its close would find her, though the storm that she had dreaded had come and left her stripped of her fortune. The field which she trod might be barren and bare, but she had discovered below its surface a treasure beyond all price.

It was far otherwise with Cora. As she opened note after note that had been handed to her from the post-bag, and read many that contained kind words of sympathy, but not one that offered a permanent home, fierce, resentful feelings towards a false, faithless world, mingled with pining discontent and rebellion against the decrees of Providence. Cora, like the Israelites in their wanderings, was *much discouraged because of the way*, and she murmured in bitterness of soul.

"All words—words—words!" she muttered to herself, as she flung her notes into the fire; "not one of the writers would give a sovereign to save me from begging or starving.

Lionel did not come down to breakfast; since the arrival of the telegram he had never made his appearance till a late hour in the day. A large letter lay waiting for him now on the side-board, but attracted little attention; Cora merely observed, as she glanced at the address, that she hated the look of letters of business.

The morning's post brought Arthur no satisfactory answer to the letters which he had written to London in reply to advertisements, or to friends from whom he had asked counsel or help in procuring some situation. In this land, where every profession is crowded, and there are many aspirants to every office, it usually costs even the talented and well-educated man a severe and prolonged struggle ere he can force his way to a position



"ALL WORDS—WORDS—WORDS!"

of independence. Arthur was disappointed, but not discouraged. He had learned that a murmuring, mistrustful spirit is hateful in the sight of God, who knows the need of His people, and will in due time supply that need.

"My dear Arthur, I have some news to give you," said Sir Thomas Brereton, in his most patronizing tone, as he seated himself at the breakfast-table with an open letter in his hand. "I have not been neglectful of your interests; I have exerted myself, and I hope with some

success, to forward your praiseworthy wish to render yourself independent of the caprices of fortune."

Such a prelude insured the attention of every one present. Mrs. Madden, having just filled the silver teapot, leaned back smilingly in her chair to listen; Lina, for the first time in her life, felt almost kindly towards the knight.

"I have here the offer of a place for you, Arthur," continued Sir Thomas, bringing out his words slowly and emphatically, while his fore-finger rested on the letter. "It is not all that I or you might wish or desire, but still, as the proverb says, 'Half a loaf is better than no bread.' Mr. Biggs, a London merchant, trading with Russia—senior partner in a highly respectable firm—states that he has a clerk's place at your service, salary £70 per annum, to be increased in the course of years, if satisfaction be given, to £100. If you take my advice, you will close with the offer at once."

Arthur felt his cheek growing hot, and intuitively glanced at Lina. Cora burst out with a satirical expression of her scorn at such a proposal being made to a Madden.

"I am sure that Arthur is eternally obliged to you for your exceeding kindness, and the very remarkable judgment which you have shown in selecting a place for which an education at Eton has so peculiarly fitted him. You hold out a worthy prize for the ambition of a young man who has won some scholastic honours. Year after

year spent in a London warehouse in counting hides and weighing tallow, the luxuries of some back attic in the city, the meal at the cheap eating-house, the second-hand coat of shabby-genteel from the pawnbroker's shop—oh, these are certainly temptations which few would be able to resist! I wonder that you do not add as a further attraction to Arthur," she added, with a meaning glance at Mrs. Madden, whose father had made his fortune in the saddlery trade, "that he may possibly rise to deal with hides in the manufactured form, and if very steady, painstaking, and persevering, win aldermanic honours at last."

The allusion was so obvious and so insolent that the colour deepened on Mrs. Madden's smooth cheek, and Sir Thomas replied in the sneering tone which was his favourite weapon of offence, "Miss Madden has doubtless formed wiser plans of her own for setting her brothers in the way of reaching the bench of bishops or the wool-sack through the help of the influential friends in London with whom she will take up her residence next week."

Arthur felt much annoyed at his homeless sister's having exposed herself to such a retort, and spoke at once in order to cover Cora's confusion. He thanked Sir Thomas for having taken any trouble on his behalf, and said that he would not decline without due consideration any offer that gave him a chance of honourably earning a subsistence. Then, to change the current of a

conversation which had become painful to all present, Arthur spoke of the invalid missionary, whose strength was so much restored that he had expressed an intention of calling to thank Mrs. Madden for the hospitality which she had proffered.


"Ah, Arthur!" exclaimed Lina, "if you could but realize your boyish wish, and go with him to the Holy Land!"

How often had the same thought crossed the mind of Arthur, though set aside as a baseless dream in which he dare no longer indulge! Arthur could not visit Palestine on his own resources, while years must elapse before he could complete the training needful for an ordained missionary. During such years, and indeed afterwards, how could his sisters subsist? For the sake of those helpless, destitute girls, brought up in luxury, cradled in ease, Arthur must seek for himself some office, however repugnant to his natural tastes, which would afford some immediate salary. A good swimmer may cheerfully breast the rough waves, and even find enjoyment in the effort; but if he has to buoy up two helpless burdens, he may well dread sinking beneath their weight. Had not Arthur Madden had a secret support of which the world knew nothing, he might have despaired of reaching the shore, and have been tempted to cast adrift, and leave to the mercy of others, at least the sister whose scorn and unkindness had been one of his bitterest trials.



CHAPTER XXXIII.

DESIRES GRANTED.

“ RTHUR, dearest, can you give me a little of your time—just a quarter of an hour?” said Lina, as she entered the drawing-room, where her brother was engaged in separating his music from that of the rest of the family, for the purpose of packing.

Arthur laid aside the pieces of flute-music, and drew a chair for his sister close to his own, but Lina preferred seating herself on a footstool at his feet.

“I want you, dear Arthur, to look at this list; I was making it out before breakfast;”—and Lina placed in her brother’s hand a long paper, on which she had written down every little article that she possessed of any pecuniary value—jewels, lace, and other small treasures, from the silver mug given to her when she was an infant, to the golden thimble which had been her last birth-day *souvenir*.

Arthur glanced rather sadly down the list, and then asked, "Why have you placed a price beside each, my wee thing?"

"I thought—I thought," said Lina, colouring and stammering a little, "that that is what they might bring me."

Arthur bit his lip with a momentary expression of pain, then recovering himself, said in a tone as cheerful as he could command, "You are mine own brave Lina, my precious sister;" and bending down he tenderly kissed her fair brow. Arthur then looked again at the list. "You need not have put down our dear mother's diamond brooch," he said gravely; "you never could bear to part with that."

"I thought so at first," said Lina with a sigh; "but then it is by far the most valuable jewel that I have, and I felt—I knew"—(Lina's voice trembled with emotion)—"that if she could speak to me now, she would tell me to part with it—for her Arthur."

"Not for me!" cried Arthur.

"Yes; you must listen patiently to my little plan," replied Lina, resting her small clasped hands on her brother's knee, while she looked up fondly into his eyes. "I thought that with what my little property and yours would bring, you might be able to follow your studies, and pass the competitive examination, just as you wish to do, Arthur. If you could steer through the shoals

for the next year or two, then," she continued gaily, "you know all would be clear water beyond, and we might float away so happily together."

"But Cora—"

"Cora has more jewellery than I have, and more friends; though she might not like to part with the one, or throw herself on the kindness of the others," said Lina; "but I think that she might manage for a while, till you had the power to help her—or Lionel," Lina added, with a little doubtful shake of the head, for no one who knew Lionel well ever expected to receive much assistance from him.

"There is only one of the party whom my Lina seems quite to have forgotten, and that is her own dear self," observed Arthur, with grateful tenderness.

"Nay, nay, Number One was never yet forgotten," replied Lina, with a not very successful attempt to resume her usual playfulness. "Look here, Arthur," and she somewhat nervously drew forth a smaller paper; "do you not think that this might do as an advertisement in the *Times* or the *Record*?"

Arthur read the following words with a heavy heart:—

"A very young lady is anxious to find a situation as a companion to a lady, or teacher to little children. She plays and sings a little, would try to make herself useful, and would be content with a very small salary."



THE ADVERTISEMENT.

“What do you think of my first attempt to appear in print?” inquired Lina, as Arthur remained for some moments gazing fixedly on the paper without uttering a word. “Do you think that any one will give me a trial, or will all set me down as good-for-nothing at once?”

Arthur could not speak ; he laid down the paper and covered his eyes with his hand.

“Nay, Arthur dearest, you must not feel it like this. Why should not I work as well as yourself? why should not I also try to earn an honourable subsistence? I know that I can do very little, but then I should expect very little; and if I but do my best, I feel—I know that I shall be helped.”

"Lina, my darling, you little know what you would have to endure; you, so young, so unaccustomed to trial!"

"I shall not have more trial than is good for me, Arthur. I have till now led a life so idle, so selfish—I have been such a spoiled child! I do believe that the discipline is needed, or else it would not be sent. O Arthur," continued Lina, while the tears gushed to her blue eyes, "we must not be like the Israelites in the desert; we must believe, trust, submit; and then we are sure, quite sure, all will turn to blessing in the end!"

Arthur took Lina's hand within his own, and pressed it fervently to his lips. Never had he felt so rich as at that moment in the love of one who was twice his sister,—by tie of blood and by that holier tie which binds together the children of God. If there was sorrow in the heart of Arthur, it was a sorrow that had more of sweetness in it than what the world calls pleasure can have. He was about to speak when he was interrupted by the hasty entrance of Lionel, followed by Cora; the former held an open letter in his hand, and his manner was flustered and excited.

"He has behaved handsomely—more handsomely than one might have expected," said Lionel, as he gave the letter to his brother.

"It was the least that he could do," interrupted Cora; "I don't thank a robber for giving back a poor portion of his spoils."

Arthur and Lina with keen interest perused the letter, which was from the lawyer of Mr. Edward Verner. It was couched in language most courteous. His client, so wrote Mr. Lowe, would not set aside entirely the bequests of his uncle's will, even though that will had been made under unhappy mental aberration. Mr. Verner had, therefore, satisfaction in placing five thousand pounds at the banker's to the account of each of the four children of the late Mr. Madden; and he would feel it a source of gratification if personal intercourse should be opened between them and himself. Mr. Edward Verner had greatly regretted that circumstances, by opposing their interests, had unhappily led to any unpleasant feeling between the two families; nothing should be wanting on his part to remove any painful impression which the result of the lawsuit might have left.

"God has touched his heart," thought Lina; "God has made our very adversary come forward to help us in our need!"

Arthur, with a joyful sense of relief, gave back the letter to Lionel, with the observation, "Mr. Verner has acted in this like a gentleman and a Christian;" and bending down to Lina, he whispered, "Your two papers, dearest, may now be put at the back of the fire; but never shall I forget what you would have done for the sake of a brother!"

"Does Mrs. Madden know of this letter?" inquired Cora.

"Yes; she and Sir Thomas were present when I opened it," said Lionel, "and I warrant you their congratulations on its contents were hearty and sincere!"

"They are interested parties," observed Cora with a sneer; "I daresay that the lady now wishes that she had been a little less chary of her loans, and the knight a little more so of his advice!"

"What are you thinking of, Arthur?" cried Lina, who saw a quiet smile flit across the features of her brother.

"Wildwaste," he replied, in a tone too low to reach any ear but her own.

"We shall certainly be off next Monday," said Lionel. "Cora, do you think that the Mowbrays will receive you?"

"They will—*now*," she said coldly. "Oh! it is well to have a little poverty to use as a touchstone of friendship. We should never have known all the meanness, the selfishness, the insolence of Sir—"

"Hush!" whispered Lina, as she saw the door open, and Mrs. Madden and Sir Thomas enter the room.

"I cannot tell you, dear Arthur, the pleasure which this intelligence has given me," said the knight, coming forward with a bland air of congratulation. "It is not that five thousand pounds will place you beyond the

need of personal exertion, but such a sum will enable you to choose your career with every possible advantage, perfectly clear of those debts"—he glanced at Lionel—"the weight of which, to a man of honour, is more oppressive than any other trial which poverty brings."

"Ah! here comes Arthur's friend the missionary," exclaimed Lina, who chanced to be looking out of the window. She had seen him before at the cottage, and, like her brother, had been much interested in one who bore in his countenance the impress of a noble spirit chastened by heavy trial. Lina venerated the man who was about to devote his life to active service for his heavenly Master without hope of earthly recompense.

"He is still weak; I will go and welcome him to the castle," said Arthur.

The visit of a poor missionary was an event totally devoid of interest to Lionel and Cora, who withdrew into the recess of a window to arrange future plans together. They scarcely turned their heads when Arthur re-entered the room, with a pale, delicate-looking gentleman, of about forty years of age, leaning upon his arm."

"Let me introduce you to Mrs. Madden," said Arthur; "it is strange that though we have met so often these last few days, and certainly do not feel towards each other as strangers, I have not yet heard your name!"

"I did not wish to mention it to my preserver," said the missionary, "till he and I should know each other

better, and until some directions which I had given should have been carried out. There might otherwise have been some little awkwardness felt at the meeting of Arthur Madden and Edward Verner."

"Edward Verner!" ejaculated Lina, and the name was re-echoed by Mrs. Madden and Sir Thomas in varied tones of surprise. The sound of that painfully familiar name startled Lionel and Cora into sudden interest; they were so completely taken aback at this most unexpected appearance of one so long regarded as an opponent, that they could scarcely yet recognize in him a generous benefactor.

Mrs. Madden, however, who never lost her self-possession, came forward and courteously welcomed her guest, and so gave time to the Maddens to recover from their surprise. To Arthur there was unmingled pleasure in finding that the man from whom he was receiving a gift of five thousand pounds, was one already under obligation to himself, and one whom he could heartily like and esteem. He cordially grasped Mr. Verner's hand, then led Lina up to him and introduced her. The young girl could hardly yet believe that that mild, spiritual-looking man, so gentle and fatherly in his manner, was the triumphant litigant, Edward Verner, whose name by that painful *v.* had been so long linked with her own!

Lionel and Cora soon recovered their composure, and the former even expressed something like thanks for the



THE INTRODUCTION.

communication that morning received. Mr. Verner would not suffer him to dwell on the subject, there was something on the missionary's mind which he seemed anxious to impart; and when the first excitement of recognition had passed off, and all were quietly seated, Mr. Verner, with some slight embarrassment, proceeded to explain the cause of his unexpected appearance at the castle.

"It has been, I need scarcely say, very painful to me

to controvert in any way the will of an uncle from whom, until late years, I had experienced nothing but kindness. I felt from the first a strong desire to link my own interests with those of some member of the family to whom he was related; and from the time when Arthur Madden showed his high sense of honour by forwarding his father's letter to my lawyer, it seemed to me that Providence had marked out the course which I should take in case of the suit being decided in my favour. With this idea on my mind, and desirous personally, without a day's delay, to convey such a communication as Mr. Lowe has since made by letter, within half an hour after the verdict was given I was on my way to this place. I took a horse from the station, and all here know what followed—how my life was preserved by the courage of the very individual with whom I was most anxious to meet. If I concealed my name in the cottage, it was because I wished thoroughly to study the character of my young preserver before making to him a proposal, his acceptance of which may influence the whole of our future lives. I am about to go to Palestine, to devote my whole energies to seeking out there the lost sheep of the house of Israel. I desire a companion,—a son, who would be to me the same in all things as if he were indeed born my heir. It has pleased God that I should be childless, and you," he addressed himself to Arthur, "fatherless; it shall no longer be so from this day, if

you are willing to share my fortunes, as the cherished son of my adoption."

The heart of Arthur leaped at the proposal, but his eye fell on Lina as she sat tremulous and pale, with her eyes fixed intently upon him, as she breathlessly awaited his reply. Arthur knew that the elder members of the family, placed above want by their generous rival, could make their own way in the world,—he was in no way necessary to them; but Lina, his loving, his devoted young sister, who had clung to him through joy and through sorrow, whose mind was just opening to pious influences, could he leave her to the guardianship of Lionel, to the cold companionship of Cora? Arthur could not, would not desert her: his decision was promptly made.

"I feel deep gratitude to you for such an offer," he said to Edward Verner; "under different circumstances I should thankfully have accepted it, but as doing so would involve complete separation for—I know not how long—from these—from one—" he hesitated, embarrassed by the presence of Lina. But she read his thoughts, and interrupted him with the simple frankness of her nature. "O Arthur, dearest, don't stop for me! If you are happy I shall be happy—" Lina would have said more, but broke down in the attempt—overwrought feeling choked her utterance.

"Why not be happy together?" said Mr. Verner, looking with fatherly tenderness first on the sister, then on

the brother. "God forbid that I should be the means of breaking so holy a tie ;—let me have a daughter as well as a son ! If your sister, Arthur, be one, as I cannot but think, who would gladly take part in a mission of mercy, why should she not come with me and my widowed sister ; why should she not help in teaching the daughters of Israel and their little ones, while my adopted son and I address ourselves to the men ?"


"Oh ! if I were but worthy !" exclaimed Lina, bursting into tears, which were tears of delight.

"God can alone make any of us worthy, my child, to bear His message of love, to work in His vineyard," said Verner ; "but He who has given the will to serve can also bestow the power. In His strength let us go forward, cheered and encouraged by mutual sympathy, and looking for that blessing which can crown our labours with success, and fill our hearts with thanksgiving and joy !"





CHAPTER XXXIV.

 EDWARD VERNER remained for some days at the castle, a welcome and honoured guest. Lionel and Cora went to London on the Monday. The former, after giving to his step-mother a cheque to the full amount of his debt, turned his back upon her dwelling with a determination never to enter it again. Arthur and Lina remained longer at the castle, as the former had many arrangements to make. Wildwaste, the scene of his first labours for God, lay very near to the young man's heart, and now one of his most earnest desires was to be fulfilled. Arthur was able to take measures for the erection of a small schoolhouse on the site of the burned public-house; and Mr. Eardley undertook to engage a worthy couple to live and labour there, Mr. Verner pledging himself to pay their salary year by year.

Arthur and Lina were very busy and very happy during these last days of their sojourn at Castle Lestrange. The more they saw of Mr. Verner, the more they felt

that they could give him the love and reverence due to a parent. Arthur could not, however, leave his class without regret, and his heart saddened as he entered for the last time the cottage of Deborah. She was not to remain its inmate long: by Mr. Eardley's kindness the poor woman and her children were to be removed to Axe, where painful associations would not surround them, where Deborah would be constantly supplied with work, and where she and her family would enjoy those means of grace which they had so lately learned to value.

There was a very large meeting at Mr. Eardley's closing lecture on the history of Moses, as to many at Wild-waste it would afford the last opportunity of seeing the beloved young teacher, ere he started with his sister for the East. It was with a feeling of tender sadness that Arthur looked round on so many familiar faces—the broad, sunburnt brow of Holdich, the gentle countenance of his wife; Deborah's worn features, and little Lottie's wistful black eyes. Arthur was leaving behind him those whom he hoped to meet again in heaven—some to whom he had himself shown the way to that promised land. The time spent at Castle Lestrange had been a sowing time for eternity; and Arthur, as he recalled his struggles, his trials, his temptations, the successive steps by which he had been drawn on a path which he had at first refused to enter, thankfully set his stone of remembrance in the confession, *Hitherto hath the Lord*

helped me ! The experience of the past cast a radiance of bright hope over the future. Arthur knew not what trials or what blessings might await him in the far distant land whither he was bound ; but like the pillar of fire over the camp of Israel was the assurance of faith, *This God is our God for ever and ever, He shall be our Guide even unto death.*

LECTURE X.—DEATH OF MOSES.

The time of the departure of Moses was now at hand. He might say, like one whose devotion to God and love towards Israel resembled his own, *I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith : henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day.*

Bright gleams of victory were to precede the decease of Moses, like the golden rays that rise from the setting sun. A courteous message sent by him to Sihon, king of the Amorites, asking permission for Israel to pass through his land, was answered by a fierce, unprovoked attack from the forces of the heathen ruler. The young generation of Israel, as yet untried in war, now made the first proof of prowess. Sihon was defeated and slain, and great slaughter made of his people. Og, the gigantic king of Bashan, was the next who assailed the children of Israel ; he and his forces shared the fate of

the Amorites, and their land fell, as a conquest of war, into the victor's possession.

The land of Moab was the next entered by the multitudes led by Moses. They came with no intention of injuring its inhabitants, who were the descendants of Lot, nor was any active opposition made to the passage of the chosen people. Bitter hatred and jealousy towards them were, however, entertained by the king of Moab, who, not daring to meet Israel in open fight, sent for Balaam the prophet to curse them. I shall not dwell on this interesting episode in the wanderings of God's people, which does not especially bear on the personal history of Moses. We know that the Lord turned the threatened curse into blessing, and that the prophet, gazing from the heights of Peor, exclaimed, *How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob; and thy tabernacles, O Israel!*

The neighbouring tribes of Midian,* by subtlety, inflicted a deeper injury upon Israel than could have been caused by the open attack of the most powerful foe. Mixing with the unsuspecting strangers passing through their fertile plains, the Moabites and Midianites led Israel into idolatry and other deadly sins. Heavily fell the chastising hand of God on the offenders amongst his people; while Midian and her guilty chiefs were given over to the conquerors' sword.

And now the Israelites moved on to the mountains of

* Descendants of Abraham by Keturah.

Abarim, a wide range to the west of the Dead Sea, into which flowed the Jordan, dividing them from Canaan, the land promised by God to their father Abraham. Of this range Pisgah or Nebo formed one of the loftiest heights. From its summit the Leader and Lawgiver of Israel was to behold the fair inheritance of the people of the Lord, according to the divine command: *Get thee up into the top of Pisgah, and lift up thine eyes westward and northward, and southward and eastward, and behold it with thine eyes; for thou shalt not go over this Jordan.*

But first Moses made calm preparations for his approaching departure. He solemnly committed the leadership of the people to the noble Joshua. In a parting address to those whom he so long had faithfully governed, Moses recapitulated the history of God's marvellous deeds wrought in their behalf, and with the earnestness of a dying parent implored them to keep God's holy law, that His blessing might rest upon them. From this address, which fills almost the whole of the Book of Deuteronomy, I will but quote a few verses. If we treasure up the last exhortations of holy men, how precious must be the utterances of him who had spoken "face to face" with the Lord—of him who was inspired by the Holy Spirit, and who was about to close the most glorious career which had ever been granted to man.

Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord: and

thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. . . . And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep His commandments, or no. And He humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that He might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord.

And through the dim vista of ages to come, the inspired Moses beheld the glimmer of that Light which was to be the glory of Israel. Moses bore witness to the coming Redeemer, not only by type and symbol, but in the words of his parting address: *The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee;*—which words St. Peter, preaching to the Jews, expressly applied to Christ.

Moses closed his long exhortation with a glorious song, which, by the Lord's express command, he not only wrote down, but taught to the children of Israel. It was as

though his lips, like those of Isaiah, had been touched with living fire. "Thoughts that breathe, and words that burn," burst from the inspired saint, standing on the brink of eternity. It was the Spirit of the Lord of Glory that spake by the mouth of Moses.

Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak ; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth. My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass : because I will publish the name of the Lord ; ascribe ye greatness unto our God. He is the Rock, His work his perfect : for all His ways are judgment ; a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is He. . . . The Lord's portion is His people : Jacob is the lot of his inheritance. He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness ; He led him about, He instructed him, He kept him as the apple of His eye. As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings : so the Lord alone did lead him.

Time will not allow me to give long extracts from this most sublime of songs, nor to repeat the solemn blessing wherewith Moses, the man of God, blessed the children of Israel before his death. It was meet that Moses, like his Lord, should—when ascending to God—part from his beloved people with a blessing. That Moses, who

had been a type of Christ through his life, was in some mysterious way a type also in his death, we seem to gather from his own words, *The Lord was angry with me for your sakes*; confirmed by the declaration in the Psalms, *It went ill with Moses for their sakes*. We are thus led to believe that the Intercessor for Israel was also a sufferer for Israel; and that his death was, in some way unrevealed to us, linked with the transgressions of his people.

But oh, how different was the peaceful close of the life of Moses from the mysterious horrors of Gethsemane, the unutterable anguish of the cross! Many years had passed over the head of Moses, but time had had no power to injure this chosen man of God;—*his eye was not dim, neither his natural force abated*. Neither the lingering pangs of disease, nor the cruel hand of violence were to sever his thread of life. The Master submitted to every insult and torment that man or fiend could inflict; to the servant was granted such a death as immortal angels might almost have envied! Can thought picture the parting between the Leader of Israel and the people who loved and revered him, whose children's children, as long as the world endures, will love and reverence him still! What individual amongst those thousands and hundreds of thousands did not regard Moses as a father—did not seek his blessing—did not esteem a sentence from his lips as some precious thing to

be treasured up until death ! Moses had seen that generation grow up around him, and that noble generation of heroes was far different from the elder one of slavish idolaters, whom he had first led forth from Egypt. We can paint the multitude at the foot of Mount Pisgah, weeping and mourning as if for a parent, as they watched the Prophet with firm step ascending to die ;—not fearful, nor trembling, but resting in the assurance expressed in his own sublime words, *The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.* The last sounds from earth which would reach the ear of Moses, would be such sounds as told of the love and grief of a grateful nation, and then—he was left alone with his God.

Moses reached the summit of Pisgah, and looked down on the fair land spread beneath him. Far as eye could reach—behold the inheritance of Israel ! *The Lord showed him all the land of Gilead, unto Dan. And all Naphtali, and the land of Ephraim, and Manasseh, and the land of Judah, unto the utmost sea. And the Lord said unto him, This is the land which I swear unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed.*

A more glorious inheritance still lay before the dying saint, when he should have crossed—not the Jordan, but the narrow river of death ; an inheritance purchased for him and for all believers by the blood of the Lamb



THE PROMISED LAND.

slain from the foundation of the world. Moses looked down on the Promised Land—he could look up to a Home of glory ; he looked back on a life devoted to God—he could look forward to a blissful eternity. *Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.*

And so the leader of Israel gently laid life's burden down, and slept his last peaceful sleep. No pompous funeral rites were his, but what magnificent pageant of woe could be compared with the last honour paid to

Moses, whose lifeless remains were the peculiar care of the Lord? It is written, *And He buried him in a valley, in the land of Moab, over against Beth-peor; but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day.* It seems probable that the tomb of the great Lawgiver was thus concealed from the knowledge of men, lest a nation prone to idolatry should have worshipped his honoured dust. From a mysterious passage in the Epistle of St. Jude, it appears that the glorious archangel, Michael, had charge of the body of the saint.

Moses was again to revisit earth, again to appear in glory before the wondering eyes of sons of Israel. Shut out from Canaan in life, but not after death, after the lapse of more than fourteen hundred years the leader of Israel, with the prophet Elias, appeared in the Holy Land on the Mount of Transfiguration, in presence of the glorified Saviour. Again Moses spake "face to face" with his Lord, whose countenance did shine like the sun, whose raiment was white as the light. And on what mysterious theme did the incarnate God converse with the saint thus summoned—after many ages—from the invisible world? They spake of Christ's *decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem.* This was a subject meet for immortal lips. They spake of that which was the fulfilment of prophecy and of type, that death which was prefigured in the bleeding paschal lamb, in the sacrifices for sin, in the smitten rock, in the brazen serpent

raised on high for the healing of men. While we attempt to realize, however faintly, such an interview as that recorded in the gospel, we feel no surprise that the witnessing apostles were overpowered by its majesty and glory. We may say with Peter, *It is good for us to be here*, but a bright cloud of mystery hides from our view what is so unspeakably holy and sublime !

But the closing lesson of that glorious scene is for us as well as for the adoring apostles ! When the bright cloud passed from before their eyes, they beheld no longer Moses or Elias, but JESUS ONLY. The Mediator of the old covenant had passed from sight—the Mediator of the new covenant remained, *Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever !* God had borne witness to Moses as to a faithful servant, but now he bore witness from heaven to Christ, *This is my beloved Son ; hear ye Him.*

Yes, we behold in the blessed Saviour our great Law-giver, Leader, and Intercessor. Moses was a bright and shining light, but his glory fades like that of a star, in the full effulgence of the Sun of Righteousness, *risen with healing on His wings.*

JESUS ONLY ! Let us sum up all that we have learned of spiritual truth in these two blessed words. Jesus Christ's commandments, our law ; His perfect example, our guide ; His intercession, our hope ; His death, our life ; His love, our portion for ever.

JESUS ONLY! Oh, my beloved friends, may we one day in the realms of glory join with the sainted Moses, and all the ransomed of Christ, in the loud song of thanksgiving, ascribing all honour, blessing, and praise unto the Lamb for ever and ever!



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